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THE SPECTRUM OF RELIGION

LOREN M. EDWARDS
III

THE METHODIST BOOK CONCERN
NEW YORK CINCINNATI

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TO FLORENCE, WHOSE PURE LOVE, TIRELESS DEVOTION, UNFALTERING FAITH, AND UNSELFISH SERVICE HAVE HELPED TO GIVE REALITY AND VITALITY TO RELIGION AS A PERSONAL POSSESSION, THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED BY THE AUTHOR.

CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
	Foreword	9
I.	The Religion of the Upward Reach	15
II.	The Religion of the Burning Heart	33
III.	The Religion of the Struggling Soul	53
IV.	The Religion of the Daily Deed	71
V.	The Religion of the Open Hand	91
VI.	The Religion of the Christian Church	111
VII.	The Religion of the Forward Look	137

FOREWORD

Not even the deathless interest in the subject of religion could warrant this book if it were theoretical or speculative. Grant that this writer were prepared to produce such a treatise—an assumption which he emphatically denies—the needs of our day do not include a compilation of *a priori* arguments for religion. That our needs do include, however, such an understanding of religion as to interpret it in terms of modern life even the unthinking understand. The general volume in the library of the "Men and Religion Forward Movement," that wave of religious zeal which swept America a half dozen years ago, is entitled Making Religion Efficient. Here that talismaniac word of modern times, "efficiency," is coupled with religion in the obvious effort to give such spinal strength to religious doctrine and such corpuscular vigor to religious action that the mightiest and sturdiest manhood of the generation might be enlisted in the propaganda of religion. This is well, for if religion is to commend itself to busy, thoughtful, enterprising men and women, it

must become efficient and practical. In the effort to move in the same direction I have tried for years to establish every possible point of contact with various classes of people which would help me as a minister and pastor to vitalize religion for them. I have tried to get their religious viewpoint in the hope of sharpening my own spiritual vision and of increasing the value of my spiritual service to them.

Finally, it occurred to me that it would be a matter of more than passing interest to make a survey of a number of representative groups of people in respect of their conception of religion, digest and classify their replies, and prepare for pulpit treatment such phases of religious thought and life as were stressed in the answers received. The idea of finality of utterance never intruded itself for a moment, but the personal equation in the replies, the freshness of the material, the variety of suggestions received, promised an opportunity for timely and fruitful sermon subjects which would challenge wide interest in the congregation and community. This promise was amply fulfilled, and a series of Sunday evening sermons resulted from the original survey conducted entirely within the local community.

The following inquiry was sent to two hundred people of every class and condition:

"*What Is Your Idea of Religion?* In the hope of rendering a distinct Christian service to the community, I am seeking your honest answer to this question. It has occurred to me that probably there is much variety to our thought on such a problem as well as some vagueness of understanding. You may or you may not be a professing Christian; you may or you may not be a member of the church; you may feel that your conception of genuine religion is now being worked out in our community, or you may sorrow that all religious organizations are failing to reach your ideal. These items do not really matter so far as this questionnaire is concerned. What I want to know is just how you feel about this subject."

After indicating the proposed series of sermon treatments growing out of the survey I urged signatures to the replies where at all possible, and closed the request with a word of gratitude in advance for the kindness involved. Practically every class was represented in the fifty-four written answers received. I had solicited replies from people reflecting every shade of political, industrial, social, and religious think-

ing, including a number of those whose professional or personal attitude was known to be hostile to my own religious beliefs, and some of the latter reached me by post despite their highly combustible character. The more than one hundred and fifty items treated in these fifty-four replies were classified, the sermons delivered and the chapter closed.

When I began to study this material again in preparation for a series of addresses before a college audience, it occurred to me for the first time that a deeper significance might attach itself to this discussion if the survey were more extensively undertaken and the subject more exhaustively treated. Accordingly, the questionnaire was extended to the college group in question, with the result of forty-one additional answers. Since then, the same question has been presented to groups and individuals, in several States, so that the written replies finally totaled two hundred and thirty-three. A review of these answers is impressive with their naturalness, their wisdom, and their comprehensiveness. They form what it may not be too ambitious to call The Spectrum of Religion. Every color of the religious rainbow is here and every shade of opinion. If they may not all

be blended into a single ray of burning light, such a possibility is, at the least, near enough of accomplishment to lay claim to the title of this volume.

These surveys were first made before the world war; they were continued during the progress of the struggle; and they have been tested at many points, both by the writings which the war has produced concerning religion and by numerous interviews with the boys in the uniform of the country. If expected stress has not been laid upon such themes as the religion of the soldier, etc., the omission may be accounted for because of two reasons: first, because so many have given to the subject varied and exhaustive treatment; and, second, because the mass of our boys in uniform constitute a cross section of American manhood, and every effort has been made to reflect the religious opinions and convictions of our people whether in civilian or military garb. If our analysis of religion fails in any human contact or in any human test, then it must be discarded. The application of that test, so far as this volume is concerned, must be left to those who read and reflect.

With the understanding, therefore, that this

Spectrum of Religion is not a categorical statement of a professor of religion, but the summarized result of a pastor's clinic in religion, we begin our studies together. In the unfolding of these seven spectral themes, requisition has been made upon many other utterances on religion in addition to the two hundred and thirty-three replies. These cannot be enumerated, albeit my personal debt to them is great. I am sure, however, that many of the ideas and convictions set forth in this volume have been more or less colored by Bishop William Fraser McDowell, whose friendship has been my delight as his conspicuous ministry has been my inspiration. As an example of a piece of laboratory work in the field of religion by one who is not so much a specialist as a daily practitioner, this book is committed to public print, with the earnest prayer that from its perusal religion "pure and undefiled" may be advantaged and increased.

BALTIMORE.

CHAPTER I

THE RELIGION OF THE UPWARD REACH

"Religion is not some faint guess at abstract and spiritual realities. It is not some venturesome speculation as to what may lie behind the veils of matter and time. It is not some hazardous hope concerning destiny of personality in the to-morrow after death. Religion is not some timid, doubtful, hypothetical, servile spirit waiting outside the veil, hoping for some vagrant authentications to assure it of eternal verities. Religion goes through the veils, resolving things in a positive experience with the highest realities by communing with God. Religion is a conviction—conviction—conviction of things and relations that are eternal."

"Alas for him who never sees
The stars shine through his cypress-trees!
Who, hopeless, lays his dead away,
Nor looks to see the breaking day
Across the mournful marbles play!

"Who hath not learned in hours of faith,
The truth to flesh and sense unknown,
That Life is ever lord of Death,
And Love can never lose its own."

—*Whittier.*

"By religion, I mean the belief in and worship of Supreme Mind and Will directing the universe and holding moral relations with human life."—*Martineau.*

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CHAPTER I

THE RELIGION OF THE UPWARD REACH

WHATEVER may be the ultimate appraisal of religion, it will give proper recognition to faith. A religion can scarcely lay claim to such classification which does not bind us to the Infinite. Lesser and lower terms may satisfy the demands of theological casuists, but they will not meet the expectations of mere folks, and it is in the interests of "folks" that this book is written. Out of more than two hundred recorded answers in our survey, a generous half finds for faith a place in direct definition or suggestion. Here are some examples:

"Religion is a system of faith or worship."

"Religion is faith and trust in a heavenly Father whose power and love are infinite."

"The term 'religion' is merely form; the reality is faith."

"Religion is the worship of something upon which we place our supreme affection."

"Religion is belief in a higher, invisible, super-

human Power, to which one feels he owes obedience, and an effort to live in harmony with the laws and principles on which his faith is founded.

"The outward act or form by which men indicate their recognition of the existence of a God or gods having power over their destiny, to whom obedience, service, and honor are due."

"Religion is a belief in God."

"Religion is worship of God in all the different forms in which men worship."

"Religion is faith in and worship of the Almighty."

"Religion is something instinctive in man which reaches out for something or someone to worship."

"Religion is knowing God."

"Religion is reverence for God."

"Religion is the instinct which binds man to a deity."

"Religion is a *symptom* of faith by which we worship deity" (italics mine).

"Religion is our belief or faith in regard to the Infinite Being."

(The answer of a man whose life bears no evidence of such a faith.)

"Religion is our attitude or feeling toward God."

"Religion is the actual living day by day of a belief in God in accordance with the Commandments."

A college student of marked intellectual attainments replies: "Primarily religion is a matter of faith."

Another student says: "Religion is a reaching out after God."

Still another college man declares: "Religion to my mind is everything. No matter what it is or is not, I know that I trust Him."

It is manifest from these definitions and expressions that basic in religion is an instinctive longing for that One who is high over all, whom the nations of the earth feel after if haply they may find him, and whom we know as the Almighty and Infinite God. In the darkness of paganism this longing may be little more than a blind quest, but in the illumination of Christian truth and opportunity this longing leaps into a definite faith.

That a primary color in the spectrum of religion is faith is corroborated by teachers of theology. "In its highest sense religion is the normal, personal bearing of men in and toward

God, the ground of all finite existence." A theological teacher to whom I owe more than words can well express phrases it thus: "Religion is the personal bearing of faith toward the supernatural." A man writing on religion many centuries ago and while Christianity was yet young, declared even then that faith abides. The reference is all the more significant and convincing when we remember that the writing was really not about faith but about that other Christian verity, love. Yet in that never-to-be-forgotten climax in which love was made to shine forth with a luster that is almost blinding, Paul could not take his pen from paper until he had grouped with love two other Christian brilliants, scarcely less dazzling than it, and one of the two was faith.

The Scriptures amplify this dictum by Paul throughout the entire biblical narrative. If "without faith," therefore, "it is impossible to please God," an equivalent declaration would be, "Without faith religion is impossible." We properly begin with faith, therefore, as we enter this realm of religion, for here is one of the elemental facts of life. With as wide a range both in time and location as to command general suffrage, the fact of religion has been estab-

lished in the life of the race. It may be no more than a superstition, as the story of the gulls beating their wings against the casements of the drowned fisherman of Brittany; it may be but a vague yearning, as the straining desire of the African mother on her knees in blind supplication for the life of her sick child; it may use a stone for altar or fetish for cross; it may find no higher levels than animism nor make connection with moral demand; it may outrage civilized sense of decency; it may violate our canons of conduct and it may repulse the cultured and refined. But it requires classification as religion if it binds the human to the Infinite, if it is a quest for something higher and beyond mortal power, if it is—to use our familiar nomenclature and to rise to Christian quality—faith, trust, reverence, worship. Manifestly, here is a common human bond; here is the beginning of a brotherhood whose fuller development belongs to a later discussion. Here we are, all of us, high and low, rich and poor, learned and illiterate, Christian and pagan, bound by a faith in the Infinite.

The problem of religion, therefore, is not that of finding a man who has not faith, and taking one to him, but of finding the one whose reli-

gion is a blight or a curse and bringing him a religion that will bless and save; of finding the one whose religion inspires fear and bringing him one that inspires peace; of finding the one whose religion sanctions vileness and bringing one that insists on virtue; of finding the one whose religion haunts him with dread of the future and bringing him one that glows with the glory of a resurrection. The problem, therefore, is not to get men to have some faith, but correct faith; not some religion, but a good and true religion. Strong in the clear certitude, therefore, that faith is central in the very essence of religion, that it is a primary color in the religious spectrum, that it is universal as a fact of human experience, the burden of further inquiry concerns itself with faith in its qualities and attributes; if we are to have faith, then a faith that is true and worthy and that abides. There are, of course, certain reflections of religious thinking which are satisfied with any sort of faith: no odds what you believe, just so you believe something. Yet mere belief never changed night into morning, nor vice into virtue, nor east into west, nor sickness into health, nor death into life. Such impossible feats of necromancy are attempted in these days with a

dexterity and a persistence worthy nobler ends. Few, however, are deceived save the performers themselves, while the failures in this direction are dire and pitiable.

It would seem, therefore, that mere faith will not do as a religious essential; it must possess certain qualities of upstanding strength and vitality or prove itself unworthy the name. To meet the demands of vital religion, faith must certainly be constructive. No religious life can flourish on mere negations. Sometimes we meet friends who think that the way to define religion is to tell what they do not believe. They do not believe in immortality, they do not believe in eternal punishment, they do not believe in a literal hell, nor a serpent in the garden, etc. This is informing, but not very illuminating. Of doubts, they have a plenty, but what of their convictions? Of questions and negations they have abundant stores, but of certainties and positive beliefs they seem to have none. A thinker may affirm his earnest belief which any fool can doubt. A theologian may give the labor of years to the construction of a system of doctrine, and the next morning after it is presented to the world the papers will be full of challenging questions from a swarm of

neophytes. It requires an architect to plan a Saint Paul's or a Westminster Abbey or a Congressional Library, but any anarchist can leave them a smoking wilderness. Negations have no contributions for science or art, for educational programs or social welfare movements, for religious propagandas or kingdom-building.

This is by no means tantamount to declaring that people are not to have honest doubts. Doubts they have had, and doubts they will have. But if the doubts are genuine in their honesty, every power will be summoned, every resource will be exhausted, every testimony will be sought and heard that difficulties may be adjusted and perplexities settled. And when final settlement is made, though traditions may vanish and opinions may be abandoned, there will be solid footing somewhere. In the ultimate reduction, the terms will be positive, not negative. One echoes again and again what has often been said: "Tell me your beliefs; I have plenty of doubts of my own."

Another inherent quality of an abiding and sufficient faith is truth. Faith must preserve mental soundness; it must be straight with the four cardinal points of the intellectual compass. Fortunately, one does not need to be a theo-

logian to have religious faith; he does not need to be profound in his thought nor encyclopædic in his learning, but he must save his mental processes; he must preserve his intellectual balance. The Chinaman may pray to a god of stone, and his faith may claim help from his idol, but in the alembic of critical reason his faith disappears in the vapor of unreality. The Hindu may regard a snake with the complacency and compassion of faith which sees in the reptile the possible incarnation of a departed loved one, yet no canons of scientific or logical truth can be established for such an absurdity. Manifestly, each one is entitled to his own personal faith, but when his faith becomes folly he should not wonder nor grumble if he is left without religious companionship. Joseph Smith and Mother Eddy and Madame Blavatsky and others have full rights to establish a system of religious faith, but if the new religion will not stand the tests of intellectual sanity, or if it insists upon committing mental suicide, then the sponsor need not be surprised at ridicule and rejection. The African may rely upon a faith which prompts him to take a dose of distilled snake's entrails as a cure for cancer, or the American may rely upon a faith which waves a magic

wand and says there is no cancer there, but both of them must stultify their mental processes to save their faith. No faith can function in general or final acceptance what is not mentally straight and intellectually sound.

A third inherent quality in an all-sufficient faith is purity. Faith must not only be mentally straight, it must be morally pure. It must pass muster by conscience as well as by intellect. Some religious faiths make no point of contact with morality. Some religious tenets maintain that whatever is done in the name of religion is right, no matter how tainted with corruption or stained with impurity. A primary lesson for religious propagandists to learn is this, that morality is essential if the fabric of a religious faith is to hold together. It is just as necessary in temple or monastery as in home or hovel. No cloak of religion will hide the hideous nakedness of immorality and no infringement of morality's universal and irrevocable law will be condoned whether by monk or priest, bishop or elder. Antinomianism, ancient or modern, may be interesting as a study, but as a religious practice it arrays itself against moral hygienics and spiritual wholesomeness. When religious faith goes astray at the point of men-

tality such failure is pitiable, but when it goes astray at the point of morality such failure is despicable.

A fourth quality inherent in a permanent and sufficient faith is life. On the one hand, faith may be merely a formal and credal statement; on the other, it may be an adventure and an achievement in experience. The one will rust and rot and finally collapse; the other will stand forth in incorruptible and indestructible glory. Now, because faith is a living organism, it is constantly growing and changing. At this point it is difficult to confine faith within the limits of strict and formal definitions. Mathematics can frame a definition for an isosceles triangle in such terms as to cover every case that now exists or ever did exist or ever will exist. But you get into difficulty when you try to galvanize with unchanging definitions such verities of life as love or sorrow or joy or sacrifice or gratitude or patriotism. These are found to be varying terms whose content may be greater or less according to the particular case in question.

There was a time in the history of America when patriotism meant killing English soldiers and combating English policies; but we came

upon a time when patriotism in America meant warm fellowship with our English brothers overseas, firm fellowship in great and common tasks, and confederacy in the world war against a common foe. There are times when one would define love in terms of a single person, but when the home becomes the nest for little ones, and when children and possibly grandchildren come, love has a deeper and richer and wider meaning than even in the halcyon days of courtship and honeymoon. Love to a young couple under the subtle witchery of a campus stroll in the moonlight may seem to be very deep and satisfying, but when years have passed and hearts have softened and sorrows have bound these lives together and experiences have ripened them, then love is far more satisfying and beautiful. So it is with religious faith. It is a thing of life and therefore of growth. It is not formal but vital; it deepens with the experiences of the shuttling years.

What about the stature and the fiber of faith to-day as against what it was yesterday? May we ask this question of one another? Has our faith been alive and growing through the years? To go back over the period of a ministry of swift years, the heart leaps at the contrast.

The faith with which one began has been tested in many a crucible and inflamed by many a victory. Tested also with one period of darkness when it seemed likely, because of a throat affection, that there would be no preaching again. As in memory, one stands by the bedside and watches the bark of the intrepid sailor push out into that shoreless sea we call eternity; as he is called upon to comfort in sorrow or goes out after many a wanderer, or prays with many a returning prodigal; as he hears the penitent's prayer of confession and the convert's glad testimony; as he sees the new light brighten many a sad face and the new love transform many a sinful life; as he welcomes, of young and old, great and small, rich and poor, a great army into the church and kingdom; as he stands by the deathbed of a brother or sister or follows from the home a little white casket in which lies a tiny broken flower that never comes to bloom, while upstairs the mother's empty arms are aching, the loving heart is broken, and the pale face upon the pillow is wet with tears—as one reviews the history of such years with their trials and their triumphs the heart of gratitude overflows and praise breaks forth to Him for the stronger, deeper,

firmer, richer faith which the legacies of these years have brought.

And now for a final word suggestive of a true and adequate faith—that word is "Christian." To pronounce this word may seem to some to beg the question. Yet this discussion is not an analysis of historic faiths; it is not a process of separating the wheat from doctrinal chaff; it is not the verdict of despair upon those who know not the Christ. It is the lifting upon a pedestal of world influence and final dominating power the faith that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Such preeminence is accorded our Christian faith not because it is Christian as against Confucian or Mohammedan, but because it satisfies the canons of a permanent and an adequate faith. Christ's faith was positive and constructive. He might have been a skeptic, for there was plenty about him to make him a doubter. He had abounding faith in God, his Father, in the world mission which he came to perform, and in his ability to perform it. He believed in man and in the possibility of his redemption. His faith was true to the demands of mental sanity and to the requirements of moral purity. His faith was not a formulary or credal statement, but a program of life, an example for all.

A missionary in Japan once found a native man out near a city where a stream plunged over a precipice. He was standing so that the spray would bathe his face and enfold him in its embrace. When the missionary inquired the meaning of so strange a procedure the Japanese said: "I am trying to wash my sins away." That was as far as his pagan faith could go in its quest for the Infinite. It was a reach after God in the dark. It was in the dark, but it was a reach and it was after God. Religion, then, is faith; an outreach for divinity, a yearning for a comradeship with the Almighty; a quest for the Infinite. If faith, therefore, is one essential color in this religious spectrum, let it be true and sufficient, let it be strong and clear and positive, let it be true to mental soundness and moral cleanness, let it be vital and not formal, let it grow with the deepening, expanding experience of life; and finally let it be a Christian faith.

"A faith that shines more bright and clear
When tempests rage without;
That when in danger knows no fear,
In darkness feels no doubt.

"Lord, give me such a faith as this,
And then, whate'er may come,
I'll taste, e'en now, the hallowed bliss
Of an eternal home."

CHAPTER II

THE RELIGION OF THE BURNING HEART

"Religion is feeling and aspiration; theology is the statement of its theoretical implications."

"Religion is the soul's high conviction and experience with God."

"By religion, I mean the knowledge of God, of his will, and our duties toward him."—*Cardinal Newman.*

"Religion is tested by experience; theology by logic and history."—*From A Student in Arms, by Donald Hankey, killed in action on Western front, October 26, 1916.*

CHAPTER II

THE RELIGION OF THE BURNING HEART

A well-known man, speaking of the difficulties in the Bible, expressed himself between jest and earnest in this fashion: "The Gospels are a story, and a story may conceivably be untrue; the Epistles are arguments, and arguments may conceivably be unsound; but the Psalms are the immediate reflection of personal experiences and we can take them as they stand without asking any questions." It is not necessary to accept in toto this statement in order to sense a very practical and vital suggestion contained here, namely, that experience is central to religion. If it begins in faith, then faith must be tested in the crucible of life. If it involves trust, then trust must be verified by a practical demonstration. One does not read far in any list of definitions of religion without convincing himself of a widespread insistence upon religious experience. This insistence comes at once from the average person and from the theological or philosophical expert.

"If a person feels the presence of a living God, your critical arguments, be they never so superior, will vainly set themselves to change his faith."

"If a creed makes a man feel happy, he almost inevitably adopts it."

"To be converted, to be regenerated, to receive grace, to experience religion, to gain an assurance, are so many phrases which denote the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self hitherto divided, and consciously wrong, inferior and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right, superior and happy, in consequence of its firmer hold upon spiritual realities."

These passages, which might have been taken from a systematic theology or from the biography of one of the saints, appear in the Gifford Lectures, delivered a few years ago in the University of Edinburgh by a Harvard professor, at that time and at the time of his death, perhaps the outstanding psychologist of his generation. His treatment of The Varieties of Religious Experience is all the more arresting when we remember that Professor William James was not a member of any church, nor a professing Christian in the usual understanding of the

term. Almost any earnest student of religion will find himself in harmony with the trend and the spirit of these quotations, as well as with the references to the experimental phases of religion which have so commonly marked the survey which has been made on this subject.

"Religion is an assurance accompanying our trust in an unseen God, that makes the individual conscience at all times know that all is well with him."

"True religion is an inner experience or a change of heart."

"To me the experimental side of religion is most vital. 'I know Whom I have believed" and this knowledge is the source of my inspiration for service."

These personal words from widely separated sources indicate a marked trend of conviction. The last quotation is from a college student in his senior year in a college in the Middle West. It seems to be perfectly clear, therefore, that religion is a matter of personal adventure, is experimental rather than speculative; it involves, to use a meaningful yet misunderstood phrase, not only the head but the heart It requires little more than a cursory reading of the New Testament to bring one to the truth

that it is the expectation of Providence that religion be subjected to the test of experience.

Consider, for example, the record of association between Christ and the inner group of his disciples. We search in vain for any set of rules which he gave them, or for merely formal and credal statements which he made them. More than form, more than definitions, more than doctrines, our Lord desired that his disciples should come to know, really know him. That they might saturate themselves with his spirit, that they might feel the contagion of his example, that they might develop an intimate comradeship with him certainly these were the ideals of religion which Jesus instilled into the minds of those who followed him.

To press the case: consider the record of early Christian development after the ascension of Christ. Peter and John were arraigned before the Jewish Sanhedrin for healing and preaching. No longer weak and cowardly, these men spoke with courageous confidence and holy boldness. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." Consider also that one tenth of

the book of Acts is taken with the record of Paul's conversion and the recital of his spiritual experience. Consider further that Luke gives, in the closing chapter of his Gospel, that touching picture of Cleopas and his nameless friend who felt the touches of the divine Christ en route to Emmaus, albeit their eyes did not then behold him as the Saviour. It was the very day of the resurrection, and these two disconsolate ones were leaving Jerusalem for the village of Emmaus, seven miles distant. Consumed with their sad reflections, they gave scant heed to the Stranger who joined them on the road. But as he unfolded to them the prophetic Scriptures concerning himself, they reached their destination, and "He made as though he would go further." But he yielded to their invitation to share the evening meal and the hospitality of the home for the night. Revealing himself in the breaking of bread, he vanished, and in recollecting wonder they exclaimed, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way?"

Here is a perfectly clear and human way of stating the deep and personal fact of spiritual experience. That fact is fundamental in religion, the religion of the burning heart. The

fuller import of this we shall now study. It seems almost gratuitous to dwell upon the necessity, the value, and the importance of experience in any discussion of the essentials of religion. The mere statement of fact, unsupported and unelaborated, should carry the full weight of its importance. In a day when the principles authenticated by Francis Bacon concerning scientific experiment have found application in every field of research, their rightful place and usage in theology and in religion should pass unquestioned. In a day when science, philosophy, art, psychology, education, and practically every other system of thought and practice, are making constant and increasing use of the laboratory method, its employment in the realm of religious thought and life is accepted as a certainty.

The day has gone by when clever men could evolve from their own imagination a philosophical theory, and by an array of selected proofs foist it upon the world as fact. If in other fields of investigation theories are subjected to the acid test of experiment, it will not be surprising that similar demands are made upon religion. In the light of this truth it is strange that here and there are religious leaders who

are attempting to silence the experimental note in religion. The passing of the experience meeting in the church may be variously regarded in various quarters, but the passing of the experience in religion can be regarded only with deep regret and anxious alarm. It may not be necessary to spend valuable time in reiterated reference to the fact and the circumstances of one's conversion, but the fact itself must stand as firm as Gibraltar. The introspective features of religion have largely given way to its expressive features. In this practical day the world does not seem so interested in what one sees or hears or feels but in what one does. It must not be overlooked, however, that impressions precede expressions; being precedes acting.

One of the responses in our questionnaire came from a highly appreciated source and contains this statement, "Religion is doing and not being." To this there is the reply, with all kindness and yet with all candor, that our friend is surely mistaken. In his effort to give emphasis to what he regards as practical religion, he has overshot the mark. Religion *is* doing, very true, but it is being before doing. In fact, the doing is always dependent upon the

being. There must be life before there can be action, there must be experience before there can be service. Practical expressions of religion are necessary, as we shall find in the progress of this discussion, but you may build hospitals, feed the hungry, give employment to the poor, minister to the needy, until time ends and strength is exhausted, but unless these ministrations are the fragrant flowers of Christian love, they are as barren of religion as polar latitudes are of palm groves.

The man who doubtless knew most about the essence of religion next to Jesus put it this way: "If I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing." Paul's religion was the religion of love, the religion that knows, that feels, that is certain, or, to use the phrase which is on our lips just now, the religion of the burning heart.

Bringing the subject into more personal terms and relationships, there are three essential predications to be made concerning this religion of experience. First, the religion of the burning heart is an individual possession. Since it is so intensely personal, religious experience is subject to the variations of temperament, dispo-

sition and environment which make such a large and permanent deposit in every life.

How beautiful and tender is the setting for this revelation of Christ to Cleopas and his friend trudging on to Emmaus and then in the gracious hospitality of the evening meal! This scene has been the inspiration for poet and for artist and carries with it a mighty human appeal. And yet the experience was peculiar to these two disciples alone. These were not the circumstances of Christ's appearance to Paul nor to Peter, to Mary nor to the eleven. We do well not to attempt interference with God's marvelous plan of variation.

How interesting is the study of individuality! Take a crowd, for example, and analyze it from the standpoint of physical and facial peculiarities. Even though you have never seen before the people that compose it, they will bear marked resemblance to others whom you have seen. And yet, upon closer study each individual is seen to possess certain characteristics of face and form all his own. Now, recall the fact that peculiarities of taste, of temperament, of desires, and of antipathies may be even more marked than peculiarities of physical features; recall the fact that our intellectual, emotional,

and spiritual characteristics are even more essentially our own than our facial or physical characteristics. Then the fact is apparent that one's religious experience is fundamentally a part of his own self and is necessarily an individual possession. Much controversy on the one hand and much anguish on the other might have been spared us if we had always been willing just to be ourselves in the matter of religious experience. And yet as we have listened to some glowing testimony, or the story of some spectacular conversion, or the recital of some marvelous experience, we have been discouraged if ours did not correspond with what was being related, and, in fact, sometimes have even concluded that we were not Christians at all.

There are two items of comfort in such a situation. The first is this—that the most marked or unusual or cataclysmic experiences are the ones most talked about: on the principle that the itinerant evangelist tells his audiences about his most spectacular successes, and the insurance solicitor refers to his biggest policyholders, and the book agent displays the names of those who bought the book, instead of those who did not buy it, and the promoter of any sort of a

proposition announces the glowing, attractive, prominent features of his scheme, leaving the others unnoticed; on the principle that the papers print a column about the husband who beats his wife, cuffs the children, demolishes the furniture, and then runs away with another woman, but makes no mention of the husband who returns sober to his home after the toil of the day, caresses his wife, kisses the children, speaks tenderly, sits down quietly, and goes right along the even tenor of his way.

The other item of comfort is this—that, after all, each one is entitled to his own personal experience. It is essentially our own. We need not be discouraged if it does not tally with the experience of others; and, furthermore, we have no more right to covet the religious experience of our neighbors than we have to covet anything else that is theirs. On the other hand, it is a blunder perhaps even more serious to attempt to force other people into the molds of our own experience. I have in mind one of the most conspicuous and absurd attempts in this direction in the case of a man who was an acquaintance of college days. He came to college a mature man after having wasted the educational opportunities of youth. He joined the

church as a lad, but for years was a cold, inactive church member. Finally he was awakened, inspired, set on fire and led to a consecration which, as he thought, meant for him the ministry. He came to college all aflame with his new experience. But when he discovered that many others had not passed through experiences identical with the circumstances and emotions of his own, he straightway set out to lead them into the light. He labored with the students, the pastor, and other leaders of the church and the president of the college. Of course he was well meaning but pitiably mistaken. For example, he brought to great agony of soul a fine young man whom I had known from childhood, and whom I had known to be a boy of purity of thought, of unselfishness of life, and of remarkable strength and beauty of Christian experience. Since childhood this young fellow had been an earnest, faithful Christian. And yet because there had been no catastrophe in event nor emotion to which he could look as the beginning of this religious life, this enthusiastic brother just referred to tried to convince my friend that he was not a Christian at all.

Some people are quiet and restrained, others are active and restless; some use subdued colors

in speech, others use the rich and striking colors; some as children step across a tiny stream of self-decision, while others in mature life must battle with the waves and currents of mighty temptation and struggle like a drowning man for the shore. But no matter how or when or where, if we are now in the kingdom and are living lives of faith and love and sacrifice, let us content ourselves. For in religion, as in other matters, we are entitled to our own entity; we are entitled to "a silence and a solitude all our own."

The second predication is this: the religion of the burning heart is a social obligation. Christian experience is both individual and social; it belongs to ourselves, but it belongs also to others. The spectacle of these two men of Emmaus going straight away in the evening, retracing every step of those seven miles to Jerusalem and telling the disciples of this appearance of Jesus was thoroughly human and thoroughly Christian. If you have an experience, you will want to share it with others and you ought to share it. When Paul prays that "we may be strong to apprehend with all the saints the love of Christ," he is simply saying that we are able to grasp the full dimen-

sions of the love of Christ only on the basis of religious fellowship.

Somewhere I have heard this story: A gentleman boarded a train in the city of Atlanta. He took a seat well back in the coach, but soon noticed that a man who sat down in the front seat on the opposite side of the aisle was acting very strangely. As the train left the station, this strangely acting man turned to the person sitting behind him and spoke in a very earnest and excited manner. Then, after the exchange of a few words, he stepped across the aisle to speak to the person there. Back and forth across the aisle and from seat to seat he came, talking to everyone in a manner which indicated very intense emotion. This first gentleman kept wondering what the man could be talking about and why he was conducting himself in a manner so peculiar. At last he reached his seat and leaning down said to him in a low, earnest tone, "Is there anything the matter with your eyes?"

"No," said the other gentleman.

"Have you any friends who have anything the matter with their eyes?"

The man addressed said he had.

"When you see them, tell them to go at once

to Dr. Lane, at Atlanta, for I am sure he can heal them."

Then he proceeded to relate how about seventeen years before, a growing blindness had come to be total, and how he had groped about for those years, and how some one had referred him to this specialist in Atlanta, to whom he had gone and by whom he had been made to see. Finally, the train reached the station where this healed man was to get off. As the passengers looked out of the window, they saw him upon the platform looking into the faces of his wife and sons whom he had not seen for seventeen years and telling the neighbors and friends who had gathered there to greet him about the wonderful Dr. Lane, who had restored to him his sight. We shall want to share with those who are blind in sin the blessings of spiritual sight through our great Physician.

Moreover, we owe it to ourselves as well as to others to share our experiences with those around us, for it is a fact of common observation that the solitary, unattached Christian invariably becomes a crank. Little do we realize how constantly are our vagaries corrected in the atmosphere of a wholesome Christian fellowship. Mysticism would pass into merest

vapor, eccentricities would become unbearable, experience would be tainted with selfish pride, and bigotry would come to be characteristic of religion if we did not share with others the thoughts and blessings and joys and emotions that play such a large and vital part in our experience as Christians. Our experience, therefore, belongs to others for the common good of all. In his last book before his untimely death, Professor Rauschenbusch puts the thought in these words: "Any religious experience in which our fellow men have no part or thought does not seem to be a distinctively Christian experience." [1]

Again the religion of the burning heart is a complete satisfaction. When Professor James declares that "if a person feels the presence of a living God, your critical arguments, be they never so superior, will vainly set themselves to change his faith," he merely says that a real religious experience is the sheet anchor that holds the soul in the midst of every storm of criticism and of doubt. The facts of spiritual experience are as real as any of the facts of existence, and the former could not be doubted any more than the latter. Moreover, the facts

[1] A Theology for the Social Gospel, p. 97.

of spiritual experience are the buttresses to faith, the incentives to service, and the arguments for fidelity in the midst of any hardship or discouragement.

Out in Malaysia is a young woman who is teaching in a missionary school. Far from a fanatic, she is quiet and reserved, undemonstrative, and, as she herself says, "almost a Quaker." Some time ago their school building was burned under circumstances pointing to incendiarism. She was writing to one of her school friends, that the teachers had a prayer meeting as soon as the fire was out, thanking God that no lives were lost and that nearby buildings were not consumed. "Remember," she was saying, "all things work together for good. The Lord is with us. I feel it, I know it, and he is stronger than the devil himself, and he will not fail." If religion were mere conjecture, if it were just a set of formulas, if it were no more than just blind groping in the dark, could it be that so fair a faith would blossom in the desert of such pagan trials?

"Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way?" "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto

him against that day." Such certainties bring to troubled hearts complete peace and satisfaction. I remember now the new quiet that came to my own soul; I recall with gratitude the many seasons of conscious fellowship with him; I rejoice at the tender guidance and providential care which have blessed these years that we have walked together. No argument can shatter the truth of his presence, no shaft of scorn or criticism can destroy the calm certainty of Christian experience. On that certainty, like the Rock of Ages, every Christian stands.

CHAPTER III

THE RELIGION OF THE STRUGGLING SOUL

Huxley, at the death of his little boy, wanting to believe in immortality, as any father would under such a trial, wrote to Charles Kingsley in disbelieving strain and said: "I have searched over the grounds of my belief, and if wife and child and name and fame were to be lost to me one after another as the penalty, still I will not lie."

"And I sit and think when the sunset's gold
Is flushing river and hill and shore,
I shall one day stand by the water cold
And list for the sound of the boatman's oar;
I shall watch for a gleam of the flapping sail;
I shall hear the boat as it gains the strand;
I shall pass from sight, with the boatman pale,
To the better shore of the spirit land;
I shall know the loved who have gone before,—
And joyfully sweet will the meeting be,
When over the river, the peaceful river,
The Angel of Death shall carry me."

CHAPTER III

THE RELIGION OF THE STRUGGLING SOUL

It need not be surprising that in any general survey, such as we have been conducting on the subject of religion, there would be certain serious omissions and important lapses. The replies to our questions have been entirely spontaneous and, for the most part, rendered by those who have had no special training in exact or scientific methods, either of thought or of expression. No one has been trying to write a statement covering the field of religion, and it would not be expected that the results would satisfy the demand for a complete treatment of this engaging and deathless theme. The real wonder has been that these more than two hundred answers have covered the entire ground as thoroughly as they have. In fact, it was the discovery that about all the essentials of true religion were contained in the replies that were coming in that set in motion the more extended treatment of the theme from pulpit and in printed form.

Very few, however, have made suggestions looking in the direction of the present particular discussion. And yet, upon close study of the fact as disclosed both in Scripture and in experience, both in the life of the Son of man and in the lives of the sons of men, it will be seen that struggle is fundamental in religious development. In addition to several rather mild and somewhat vague suggestions along this line, there have come in the two pertinent words at this very point.

The first was a word of misgiving and annoyance as follows: "I do not like the word 'religion,' with its binding derivation." Then follows a paragraph on the beauty and joy of spiritual freedom.

The second was the most direct word on this phase of the study that has been received; it was this: "Religion to me means a daily struggle—battles royal in the dying to self."

There have been other suggestions of the sacrificial and the vicarious as essential elements in religion. It is for us to bring to bear upon these suggestions such prayerful investigations, such testimony of experience, such stores of biblical illumination, such examples of this truth, that it may stand forth in the clear light

of reality. Let it be understood, therefore, that we have hit upon a color in our religious spectrum that cannot be overpassed without loss.

It is not strange that some one takes exception to the term "religion" because of its derivative suggestions of being bound. It is easy to understand the thought here, namely, that the freedom and beauty and glory and joy of the religious life should be stressed instead of the suppressive and the restrictive. While this is proper, yet there is the binding sense which is real and insistent. Religion does bind; it makes impossible a wild license, a mad riot and unrestricted liberty, but places upon the individual the sobering and restricting demands of moral and spiritual requirements. It binds the soul to God, it binds the person to his highest ideals, it binds the careless to strict rules of conduct, it binds one to his fellows—this binding principle is central, after all, in religion.

The suggestion of struggle and sacrifice and suffering as integral in religion is also timely and true and requires but a short study to reveal its worth and truth. It is strange that the references to this phase of religion have been so few when once we remind ourselves of the universality of these experiences. With the feeling

that we shall be speaking to the hearts of all, and with full confidence that we are brought into full fellowship, also, with that "Man of Sorrows" and of struggles, we shall unfold the theme.

It is important that we sense, at the outset, the weight of this principle as it applied to the life of the Master of us all. The pictures of Christ from the far-off days of the earliest biblical historians are pictures of a conflict, keen and intense, of a struggle, permanent and pressing, of a suffering, bitter and soul-anguishing. Long before that nameless prophet of the exile gave us his graphic portrait of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah, we had learned from the Scriptures again and again that the Messiah would show the world the heart-break of God. He would bring redemption to the race, but the price would be the greatest in the entire universe of God's thought and purpose. He would be the Saviour, but in saving others would find that he could not save himself. His identification with Divinity was complete. His communion with the Father was constant. His life of faith and trust and peace and joy was clear and glistening. His experiences in redemption were full and satisfying, but the high-

way to such triumphs was the highway to the cross; the process of redemption was the process of self-immolation; the goal of Saviourhood was at the end of the scourge and the thorns and the cruel tree "He saved others, himself he could not save."

Accepting this without question or contradiction, nevertheless there are those who wonder what it has to do with our own religion or our own religious experiences. It may be, however, that it has very much to do with it. Of course we know that Christ was unique in character, supreme in spiritual power, the very God. On the other hand, he identified himself utterly with mankind with a completeness that was as comforting as surprising. He told his disciples that they were intrusted with the same mission of redemption with which he came into the world. He tried to make it clear to them and to us all that every truly religious life must contain sacrificial and redemptive values, that our comradeship with him must be more than personal communion and inspiration and must lay hold upon the very essence of Saviourhood. "He saved others, himself he cannot save." This was a taunting jibe with which the priests desecrated the dying agonies of the Son of God.

But these words of ribaldry became a diadem of glistening pearls. They gathered into a sentence those elements of religion that give it a sacrificial glory and that place upon the brow of struggle the halo of victory.

Here is not only a fact, but a principle; not only a gleam of glory from the atoning climax of Jesus's life, but a hint of the process by which all of us come to spiritual victory and peace. Religion, therefore, is not all peace and joy and faith and communion, but struggle and sorrow and sacrifice and battle. Indeed, there will be none of those rich and satisfying graces of religious experience without the struggle.

It will be of immense value to see, just here, that struggle, in and of itself, has no real religious significance; and we may go a bit further and say that many exhibitions of sacrifice in the name of religion are no more than self-tortures with which to pamper selfish pride. Take the Dervish or the Fakir of India as a safe example. In the name of religious exercise and for the sake of religious advancement, such a one submits to numerous and intense acts of self-immolation. He may cut himself with knives, or lie upon a bed of spikes, or refuse food, or torture himself in hideous and gruesome ways,

This is religion, of course, if done in the name of religion, but it has neither moral nor spiritual values. He may be as vile as a libertine, as dishonest as a thief, as cruel as a beast. He suffers, he struggles, he sacrifices many things, but there is no spiritual significance in it all and no true religious values resulting. That such a principle operates everywhere is surely clear to any discriminating mind upon a moment's reflection. Indeed, suffering, sorrow, affliction, struggle—all this may be the direct or indirect result of wrongdoing. It may be the harvest of a wild sowing, it may be the whirlwind of disaster following a career of reckless and riotous debauch, it may be the natural reaction from physical, mental, or moral transgression.

We live in an age that needs to have this truth rung loudly in the ears. We live in an age when too many apologies are being made for sin, when evil is being glossed over with the polish of fine phrases and veneered with the appearance of the beautiful. It is of the utmost importance, therefore, that we see the end of transgression's pathway from the beginning, that the shams of social impurity be torn away, that the crimes of political iniquity be exposed, that the wrongs of industrial inequity

be revealed and that the sins of personal obliquity be bared to the light of day. No advancement in civilization, no flood of intellectual enlightenment, no progress in scientific discoveries, no refinement of speech or manner can expunge a moral blot upon the life nor rectify a social wrong nor hide the ghastliness of sin.

This brings us to this more definite statement that struggle is a religious essential because of the great conflict that inevitably goes on in the world. This struggle is, first of all, a personal one. There are contending forces for the capture of man's soul; the citadel of human mastery is not taken without a fight, and one is not likely to come to the peace and joy of religious experience without a struggle.

In the case of young children that struggle may not be very apparent, and yet even with them there is sure to be some of it some time if not at the moment of conscious decision for Christ, then at intervals through the years. In the case of older people, the struggle begins as a battle between the good and the evil propensities at the time of conversion. Even though there may not be many habits to surrender, even though there may not be so many outward changes to be made in the life, yet the

necessity of surrender of will is in itself a profound struggle. Is it easy to capitulate this citadel which we call the human will? Probably not, and by the same token it will be difficult to yield gracefully and loyally from time to time to the demands for surrender and resignation which will punctuate any normal Christian life. Then the struggle is broader than that; it reaches out into the social world, out into business life, and out into all the wide relationships —personal, social, national, and international.

This life is full of cares and problems and besetments from every side. The drive of business competition, sometimes unfair and exasperating; the grind of unequal labor for the necessities, often perplexing and discouraging; the shafts of adverse criticism, sometimes harsh and bitter; the schemes of enemies, sometimes diabolical and disastrous—all these are contests that make up the warp and woof of experience. How one meets these assaults, how he fortifies himself, how he summons courage for the fray, how he bears himself in the presence of hostile attack, how he struggles and suffers —these have their intense religious aspect and register their values in upbuilding or tearing down character. We all have seen people grow old under

the test of affliction, grow stronger in faith, more tender in love, more radiant in hope. We have seen asperities soften in the fire of great soul-struggle; we have seen stubbornness broken under the stress of severe affliction; we have seen selfishness melt away with the coming of grief and sorrow. Charles Lamb with his sister stricken with the malady of madness, yet weeping with her and tenderly caring for her; Abraham Lincoln stooping under the weight of war and the heavier oppression of distrust and malignity; Theodore Roosevelt mellowing under the death of his son in France, all clothe in flesh and blood the principle under discussion that often the very struggles of life, the very pressure of life, bring us to moral and spiritual nobility.

On the other hand, we have seen the heart harden under the pressure of adversity, we have seen love curdle in the atmosphere of disappointment, we have seen the character crumble under the weight of failure and grief.

Here, for example, is a man who would have been a leader in any group anywhere; a chance acquaintance would impress one; indeed, his face had that indescribable attraction which is not beauty so much as strength and magnetism. To look at him you were certain of some things;

certain of a clean life, certain of a strong will, certain of a worthy character. Closer acquaintance strengthened first impressions. You found him courteous, kind, sympathetic, consecrated, capable, a true friend, a generous benefactor, a wise counselor, a successful man of affairs, with wide and important business interests, respected in the community, loved in a broad circle of friends, honored in the church.

Yet his life was peculiarly weighted with cares. Of course there were those who looked upon him as the care-free child of opulence, but they did not know. Tragedy had found him more than once; a close relative died in his home from alcoholism, and he carried the weight of it; another met a sudden and untimely death. A third died and was buried in splendor when this man knew that there was not enough left of the estate for the widow to keep the house over her head. His friends saw this fine man struggling under these loads and marveled at his fortitude; they learned from his own lips that certain large investments were proving to be unprofitable, but little realized the extent of his failures nor the wearing down of nerve and spirit and courage and strength and brain—until the crash came.

And when it did come it was terrible: this man who helped so many could not help himself; he who had guided others through their storms and sorrows floundered in the heavy seas; this man who literally saved others could not save himself. What happened no one shall ever know. Maybe his faith failed him; there were those who said so. Mayhap he could not admit financial defeat; there were some evidences of that. Maybe his mental powers gave way under the strain; surely he was not himself. No more pathetic figure ever lived than he. The strong tower crashing under the beating of the storm. The bark broken to bits by the engulfing waves. Whatever else he did or did not do, there are two things that seem fairly clear: first, he did not give way at the point of his moral character; second, he did not share his struggles. Even if he talked to his heavenly Father about them, he locked them in his own breast.

Close friends had for him a great and sympathetic pity and longed to help him with some words of consolation, but he seemed so self-sufficient, so strong that he could shoulder the load. It is a mistake; the struggles will be ours, the burdens will come; the sorrows will sweep

our way; and we shall be unequal to the task. Other friends can help us, but most of all, that "Friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

This leads us naturally to our final observation, namely, that although struggle is inevitable, although sometimes it is the consequence of sin, although it is a part of religious growth and character-development, nevertheless there is the path to victory. Do we know the secret of the victorious life? Have we conquered in the midst of bitter struggle? Have we come to peace after stress of storm and tempest? If there is anything that folk need to know, it is this—they need to find the way to personal victory, and with the strength of such victory they will be prepared to help lift the world up to God.

There is that pathetically charming story of "The Widow in the Bye Street," as told in poetic form by John Masefield, the English poet. It drips with tragedy. It is the story of a poor widow in the back street of London, living in honest penury, bending her back to a hard grind of daily toil, but keeping hope alive by dreaming and looking for the time when her son would become a man and go forth to take a worthy, even if humble place in the world.

But no sooner had he sallied forth and had

begun to earn a competence than he was assailed by a woman who called to him in terms of love, but who lived with him in terms of lust. The poor mother's heart was broken, she pleaded and prayed in vain; his career grew worse, and for this cheap tinsel of womanhood he finally committed a crime and was sentenced to be hung. Taking the meager savings which the mother had put aside for her funeral, she came to the side of her boy near the prison and with the agonizing faith of a mother who is to see her only child go to the scaffold, she prayed out her grief and pointed her doomed boy to the Saviour.

The recital of her soliloquy and prayer reflects the anguish of a mother's broken heart finding solace at last in prayer and faith in the forgiveness of a Saviour and hope in the radiance of glorious victory through Jesus Christ.

A review of life's experiences discloses struggle as our common lot. It comes to all; it passes no one by. Sometimes it stalks into palace or hut as an uninvited and unexpected guest; sometimes it fastens itself upon the life as the fruitage of transgression and sin; sometimes its voluntary forms and manifestations have no ethical significance, but pander to the pride of selfish immolation; sometimes it seems too

strong for feeble hands and too mighty for trembling hearts. But sometimes it is the instrument of strength, the guide to peace, the process by which fiber of character is developed; sometimes it opens the way to a new vista of spiritual opportunities, a new highway of spiritual achievement. Sometimes struggle lifts us to our true stature and robes us in our true glory. Sometimes it drives us to Him who has already overcome the world and through his victory has made possible to the race a victorious life. Here are the alternatives; here are the possible directions. There is one prayer on the lips of the earnest soul—that struggle may lead him to peace and joy and triumph and Christ!

CHAPTER IV

THE RELIGION OF THE DAILY DEED

"If we will only remember that philosophy is speculative and that religion is practical, it will become at once apparent how easy it is for religion to lose vitality by being confounded with philosophy."

Carlyle said: "The thing a man does practically lay to heart and know for certain concerning his vital relations to the mysterious universe, and his duty and destiny there, that is in all cases the primary thing for him, and creatively determines all the rest. *That* is his religion."

Bernard Shaw declared that "what a man believes may be ascertained not from his creed, but from the assumptions on which he habitually acts."

CHAPTER IV

THE RELIGION OF THE DAILY DEED

It is a matter of interest and significance that in the more than two hundred replies which have been received in our survey of religion, the single text which found most frequent quotation was the twenty-seventh verse of the first chapter of James, which reads as follows: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Presumably no thoroughgoing student of the Bible would go the length of saying that this passage is a full and final definition of religion. It is not surprising, however, that many should have seized upon this pointed suggestion from the pen of James for a statement of religion on the practical side. James is a high authority on practical religion. He was known as the apostle of works, and the five brief chapters of his epistle are punctuated with admonition for correct conduct in the ordinary relations of life. If one could pick up a copy of the book of James without knowing its

ancient and sacred authorship, it might be possible for him to imagine some modern social writer as the author. Here are a few examples: "We must be doers of the word, and not hearers only." The church is expected to have due regard for the poor in the congregation as well as for the rich. We must work out our faith if it is to be alive and fruitful. We must guide the affections of our hearts so as to be pure in life. Employers are to deal with their employees on the basis of equity and justice. Our relations with others are to be kind and peaceable, while we may expect to project our prayers on the plane of efficiency only when prayer is reenforced by action.

From these examples of the strong accent given by James to the practical and social aspects of religion, his epistle may be fittingly described as the Gospel of Social Christianity. There can be no doubt of the general appeal of this phase of religion when a survey of over two hundred separate answers on the subject of religion is carefully made. A generous majority of the friends who have answered this question have replied in terms more or less direct and incisive concerning practical religion.

They make statements such as these—that

true religion is not faith merely, but also fact, not experience only, but likewise service; that Christians must prove their faith by their works; that religion is an everyday affair, not to be kept for Sunday and the church alone; that religious faith must be a daily demonstration of what the grace of God can do for a sinner; that religion must not be a mere form or creed, but must relate itself to life; that religion is a practical program for service, and the further suggestion that probably the greatest failures in religion are made at the point of applied Christianity.

Another person says that true religion is religion in action, and at present means ministering to the suffering in our own land and in Europe. A business man, with wide and important interests, submits this: "Religion, the real worth-while kind, is a 'here on earth' proposition; the 'up in the clouds' sort does not interest men with red blood and clear habits of thinking. It does not consist primarily in 'Thou shalt nots,' but, rather, 'Thou shalt do.' It consists of true heart impulses and consequent action rather than socials, speeches, and banquets." Assuredly, some of our friends in this special list gladly accept other phases of religion as essen-

tial, but insist upon a practical religious program through which the doctrinal and personal tenets of a religious faith may function in society. Others, it is clear to see, lay such stress upon service as to make mere activity in the religious life the alpha and omega of all.

It is important at this juncture to feel the weight of Jesus's teaching and example on this question. There can be no doubt of the primacy of personal faith in the life and teachings of Christ. There can be no doubt of the clear certainty of personal experience on his part. His insistence upon personal and intimate relationship with the Divine One is a strong unwavering note which runs throughout his ministry. Nevertheless, he was constantly interpreting faith and feeling in terms of facts. He made clear as sunlight that spiritual ecstasy should register in spiritual service. His own ministry was crowded with those beautiful and fragrant personal kindnesses which were described in the summary phrase, "He went about doing good." Our Lord went from some of the real exaltations of his earthly experience directly into the highways of helpful, sometimes lowly, service. From a night of private passionate prayer he went into the synagogues of Galilee

to touch the sick and to heal the distressed. From the ethereal glories of the transfiguration mount he went down to heal a beseeching leper. From many of the loftiest raptures of his experience he turned to the most ordinary forms of service.

For example, look at the Master in that upper room at Jerusalem when all of the emotions of Saviourhood were coming to the flood, when the hour for his departure enswathed his friendship for the disciples in a new tenderness and radiance. The climax of his ministry, so far as they were concerned, had come. But note the sequence of events. "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." With this as a preparation, at the very pinnacle of his ministry, with his soul flooded with the emotions preparatory to farewell, knowing that he was to pass very quickly from the sight of his disciples, knowing that he had come from God and that he was going to God, it would seem certain that a great revelation or epochal experience was imminent. Dr. Joseph Parker represents the common expecta-

tion of some spectacular pomp or unusual glory in such a situation by introducing several hypothetical phrases as follows: "Now, Jesus knowing all this, unfolded secret wings and went up into the light, unveiled splendors which had been concealed under the guise of his flesh; called angels, host upon host—a dazzling throng —to bring the crown he had left in heaven."

Note the contrast in what Jesus really did. Knowing all this, "Jesus riseth from supper and layeth aside his garments; and he took a towel and girded himself, and he washed the disciples' feet." Turning sublime and spiritual experience into beautiful and condescending service, our Lord has given us an example for all time. In the hour of supreme exaltation, when God's eternities hung low around him, and when the immortal blessedness of Divinity beat upon him with rapturous glory, Jesus became servant of all. We have sufficient warrant, therefore, in making common cause with those who insist that religion shall find for its sublime raptures, its radiant faith, its spiritual experience, practical expression in service. True religion, therefore, among other things, is the religion of the daily deed.

That we may set forth this discussion in terms

that are unmistakable, let us study a series of religious contrasts. It is plain that those who give definite answer to this question, as well as those who make a more general insistence upon the practical phases of religion, have in mind certain well-defined antinomies. Here are, perhaps, the three outstanding ones:

1. A practical as against a theoretical religion.
2. A practical as against an ethereal religion.
3. A practical as against a hypocritical religion.

With the discussion of these three antinomies, the ground will, doubtless, be sufficiently covered for our present purpose.

1. A Practical as against a Theoretical Religion

Many persons instinctively associate religion with a set of rules, a body of doctrines, a list of formulæ. Religion, under such an impression, is a matter of councils and creeds, of historic confessions of faith and of articles of religion. What Athanasius said or the Fathers of Nicæa taught, what the Westminster Confession states or the Anglican Creed promulgates, what the theologians expound and the ancient books con-

tain, this is the content and the meaning of religion in the thinking of many both of the devotees and the critics of the church. From such a conception of religion many revolt, and that revolt is voiced in numerous statements and scraps of criticism among those who have been kind enough to detail their ideas of religion. That revolt, moreover, is seen in many directions in these days, and is true and worthy in part, while it is rank and rabid in part. It is susceptible to the most common danger in revolts, namely, that they will go too far. The autocratic rule of a Czar may be vicious, but the riotous rule of anarchy is just as subversive of true liberty; if the one is too far in one direction, the other is too far in another. Both are whole diameters from stable, equitable government.

Let us say, therefore, that this insistence upon a religion that is not bound to tradition, nor hampered by creeds, nor confined to theory is proper and pertinent. Yet there is a single word of correction that needs utterance at this point. It is this: in large measure (not in entirety) this criticism has lost its pith. This is largely a man of straw that has been stood up to be bowled over by doughty antagonists. For the most part the criticism should be phrased

in the past tense. This *was* a glaring weakness in religion, but that weakness has, in large measure, been corrected; in short, not to be too rude, our critical friends are a bit out of date.

The revolution in this regard has been, within recent years, little less than astounding. The fundamentals of religious faith abide, but the differences in denominational bodies are being softened and obscured, while the peculiarities of the various faiths are little stressed from the pulpit. When did we hear, or even notice, the announcement of a sermon on close communion, or election, or the Westminster Confession, or the apostolic succession? The fact that all religious communions are working in various organized groups toward common ends, that evangelism has come to mean about the same with all, that pulpit utterances for the most part might just as well be delivered in one pulpit as another; the fact of a common Christian accent and program is its own eloquence concerning the emphasis upon the practical and spiritual in religion rather than the doctrinal and theoretical. The churches of any city could never agree upon the historic articles of faith, nor upon the modes of baptism, nor upon certain shibboleths of denominational proclama-

tion. But practically all of them can agree upon measures of social and philanthropic betterment, upon a campaign of evangelism, upon a united impact upon paganism, upon a federated approach to the common religious problems of the day, upon ministration to the men in arms, and upon other items of pressing religious importance—and the fact that they are doing so lays low much of this sort of unfriendly criticism.

However, it is important that we give full acknowledgment to this vital question. If we can catalogue the Christian virtues, religion is expected to embody them in "familiar life" rather than talk about them. If faith carves out a kingdom for righteous dominion, religious energy and determination must occupy the full territory. If experience lifts us to the heights of spiritual vision and delight, religious exercise must function such raptures in practical service. If articles of faith recite the beauties of a life within the shelter of the church, practice must reveal such beauties in the daily round.

Religion is not a theory, it is a fact; it is not an article, it is a practice; it is not a doctrine, but a deed. Or, if it is a doctrine, doctrines must become a deed. It is a prayer, but prayer

on feet and on wheels. It is pity, but pity using a purse. It is love, but love on the lips and in the hands as well as in the heart. It is piety, but piety not only in the pews but in the office and the street and the home and the shop. It is faith, but it is faith at work.

2. A Practical as against an Ethereal Religion

It is very interesting to note that there is much objection to a religion for Sunday and the church, a religion for Sunday clothes and raptures, a religion for another world to come. This is precisely as it should be. "One world at a time." If that means such a fronting of the tasks and duties, of the opportunities, such a lifting of this life to the plane of its highest values that goodness becomes fixed in character—then the slogan is true and worthy. Religion speaks of a home in heaven, but its first beauty is in the home on earth. Religion builds temples, erects altars, and consecrates shrines, but each body should be a temple of the Holy Spirit and every hearthstone a holy shrine. Religion must be a matter of earth or it will never furnish us with a heaven; it is a fact and a force

to-day or it cannot be such to-morrow; it beautifies Monday or it can never sanctify Sunday. Religion is not for the clouds alone nor for the cloister alone; it must be exposed to the strain of everyday life. It must be of a fabric strong enough for the wear and tear of the street and the store and the school. It must be tangible enough for the political primary and the counting houses and the directors' meeting. It must express itself in fair wages, equitable industrial conditions, generous philanthropies, and welfare movements. It must be written into peace treaties and world covenants and function in mandatories. It must feed the hungry and clothe the naked and minister to the sick and help the needy, or it is not the religion of Him who "went about doing good."

Several years ago I had occasion to be closely identified with a demonstration of practical religion that convinced some people at least that it is not altogether of the ethereal brand. The city in Indiana where I was then preaching was wide open. Saloons violated every law, including Sunday closing, selling to minors, gambling, etc. There was no attempt to enforce the laws and no thought of doing so; gambling was in full blast and prostitution was unmo-

lested. In preparing a sermon on moral and civic conditions it occurred to me to get a fresh illustration for my sermon by making a round of the saloons early Sunday morning. I knew what I would find, but merely wanted to add a bit of spice to my sermon by relating what I had seen that day. Of course I found all the saloons open and could have walked into any of them, some by the front door, others by the rear door. Then I thought that it would be fair to report these conditions to police headquarters with no thought of any official action or of carrying the matter further. The chief was just returning from early mass, and I told him what I had seen. He thought I must be mistaken. Then he told me to go about my business, that my place was in the pulpit, not scouting around saloons, and added, "We have run things this way before you came to town, and we will keep on running them this way after you leave." I told my experiences that night in my pulpit and started a movement for an independent ticket for the next municipal election. This ticket was overwhelmingly elected, with good men in every office but one (a minor one). The saloons were compelled to obey the law, gambling was stopped, prostitution was eradicated—and prac

tically the same ticket has been reelected four years later.

The general feeling was that that was as real a piece of religious work as any sermon or service rendered.

3. A Practical as against a Hypocritical Religion

It will not be possible nor necessary to attempt any exhaustive treatment of this phase of the subject. It is vitally important in itself, but has an incidental bearing upon the main discussion here. It has been given some notice, however, in the survey and must not be entirely overpassed. This indictment may be classified briefly as follows: the demands of a practical religion require something more than a mere profession. Just professing religion and not possessing it is regarded by some as hypocrisy; if so, it may be described as unconscious hypocrisy. Of this kind I am compelled to believe there is an abundant supply. When religion is a dead form, when vows have been taken but have not been kept, when lips on Sunday say one thing and the life on the other days says another, when there is no reality to

religion beyond its shell—then religion must rest under terrific indictment; and if our friends want to phrase the indictment in terms of hypocrisy, I see no real reason for dissent.

But the other sort of failure at the point of hypocrisy is much more serious; it is the failure to keep religion pure at its spring, the failure to preserve the motives from taint, the failure to be as good as one tries to have others think he is, the failure at the point of the inner heart life—that is the real tragedy. Just how much short of a practical religion we come because of this heart hypocrisy, it will be difficult to know. It is easy to sweep up generalities into a heap, it is easy to multiply one and make the total large, it is easy to dash off a word of arraignment—but the situation cannot be determined like that. There are hypocrites in the church (no one knows that any better than a wide-awake pastor after several years of a given pastorate). There are men in the church who are hiding the evils of their lives under the protecting folds of a religious profession, and they may be worshipers in the pews on Sunday—nay, they may be officials in the church.

There are doubtless Eldon Parrs, just as Winston Churchill pictures them, men who con-

trol the policies of the church, who sit complacently in church with a pious demeanor and who grind down their employees, who conspire to rob the public of franchises and concessions, who despise the poor, and who are unscrupulous in business. There are such men as this man of "The Inside of the Cup." The fallacy of such a book is at the point of generalities. The trouble is that the tendency of such a book is to try to make such a type general and to place the church in the light of being controlled for the most part by thugs and libertines. There are some such - all too many - and many a pastor has had to deal with them, but perhaps it has escaped the notice of many that no institution should be judged by its worst products, especially if they are a pronounced minority. If one can be impure of speech, immodest of behavior, intemperate of personal habits, unreliable of word, dishonest of dealing, and still be religious, then religion is travesty to be shunned, a blot to be expunged. Just now there are spokesmen of various social and industrial groups that are lifting against modern religion the finger of suspicion and are questioning the Christian Church at the point of its sincerity. The challenge is worthy the closest scrutiny

and the most careful consideration. Religion may not have the suffrage of all the modern movements, especially those with a radical flavor, but it cannot afford to be doubted at the point of its sincerity.

If a church is unfair to any class, whether rich or poor, if it is selfish or sycophantic, it should feel the crushing weight of society's scorn. If the ghost that is in you does not temper your passion, does not soften your words, does not broaden your sympathy, does not straighten your morals, does not hold you to the truest and best in everyday life, then be assured that it is not the Holy Ghost. If a religion is not clean as to thought, sincere as to purpose, and pure as to motive and straight as to conduct, it is not the religion of Jesus Christ. His is the religion of the warm heart and the open hand and the daily deed. His is the religion of good tidings to the poor, of good will to the needy, of ministration to the sick and the sorrowing and the sinful. His is the religion of going about everywhere "doing good."

This is the social service of which we hear so much, as old as the religion of Christ itself, as old as the beneficent mercies of God. This is the message of James, the apostle of the prac-

tical religion. According to him, if one would be religious, he is to do what? To sympathize with the needy and dependent, to let the rich treasures of the heart pour themselves out for those who feel the grinding heel of distress, of sorrow, of loneliness and of need, to let religion find for its overflow those channels of blessing which bring refreshment to lives that are parched from thirst for kindly, sympathetic ministrations. And while you do all this, be sure to keep yourself pure and unspotted—that is the strong, clear-cut injunction of James. Do not visit the widows to get the management of their property or a title thereto; do not call on the orphans to rob them of their patrimony; do not hover over the afflicted to enrich yourself from their afflictions; do not pretend to be anybody's friend when you are not; be genuine, be generous, be benevolent, be pure. Make your religion so central and so vital, that it directs all plans, that it purifies all purposes, that it hallows all relationships, that it sanctifies all associations, that it makes every human desert with which it comes into contact to rejoice and blossom like the rose. That is the Religion of the Daily Deed, a radiant color in the religious spectrum.

CHAPTER V

THE RELIGION OF THE OPEN HAND

Hoffding says: "Religion was once the pillar of fire which went before the human race in its great march through history, showing it the way. Now it is fast assuming the rôle of ambulance, which follows in the rear and picks up the exhausted and the wounded. This too is a great work, but it is not sufficient. And when religion has disburdened herself of all her dead values, she will once more, in intimate association with ethics, rise to be a power which leads men forward."

CHAPTER V

THE RELIGION OF THE OPEN HAND

After the first classification of topics in this survey of religion it was my keen interest and concern to discover what essential religious elements had been omitted in the nearly one hundred replies that at that time had been received. I made this amazing discovery—that among the two hundred or more separate subjects discussed in the answers, practically every phase of religious truth was mentioned except one.

As subsequent replies were received from time to time, and as this survey has been extended among various groups in different places, I have watched with an increasing interest to see if the omission would be rectified by anyone.

It has become an item of sober fact that in over two hundred answers dealing with upwards of four hundred distinct themes bearing upon religion, a subject that must be regarded as fundamental was not mentioned, much less discussed. Let me pass on the secret. Nobody seemed to feel that one's relation to his possessions was an essential in religion. It is true

that service has come in for a generous recognition, and it is possible that numerous vague references to that subject might have an indirect bearing upon the giving of what one possesses for the advancement of the cause of religion in the life and in the world. It is also true that some have been as definite as the insistence upon our giving ourselves in Christian consecration. One might argue from such a premise to the conclusion that what we have, as well as what we are, belongs to God and should be included in the general program of consecration. Nevertheless, the fact remains that neither the words nor the thoughts were expressed that would suggest that we are the stewards of God's beneficence, that we are but the administrators of lands and stocks and moneys, and that our attitude toward life's possessions has a central and an essential bearing upon the entire fabric of religion.

In the first congregation to which this questionnaire was presented, was a gentleman of unusual talent, a fine young business man and a member of the official board. His specialty was Christian stewardship; he studied it, he talked it, he lived it. This was so emphatically true that his name had become linked with this

subject in the thinking of his friends. After digesting the replies received, I asked him how it had happened that he had failed to write me on his favorite aspect of religion, referring to the fact that the theme had been entirely overpassed. He assured me that he had prepared his answer, but had expected to complete it, laying it aside and forgetting it for the time. To substantiate his statement, he sent me at once the reply originally written, together with some additional comments. This is the single answer in two hundred replies making a definite statement on this phase of religion.

A casual study of the Bible, however, on this subject will be utterly convincing as to the centrality and certainty of the Word of God upon this theme. It has its beginnings back in the dim outlines of the earliest Scripture records, it bulks large in the historical and prophetic writings of the Old Testament, and it continues with a strong, clear note in the New Testament, through the teachings of Jesus, the epistles of Paul, the admonitions of apostles, and even to the final messages of Saint John the divine. It opens up a theme of varied and inviting range, it has numerous involvements, it is vast and comprehensive, but these implications must be

omitted here and now. The utmost that we can do here is to glimpse this subject as a fundamental attitude of religion, to settle beyond words its place in our religious spectrum, and to feel the throb of its mighty imperative.

In laying down the proposition that stewardship is a fundamental religious involvement it will be well to consider four key words with their implications: They are these: *Possession*, *Administration*, *Temptation*, *Consecration*. Instantly you will see that we do not include within the limits of this discussion rules of giving, nor amounts, nor objects, nor methods. More vital than systems, more fundamental than proportions, we are to analyze principles. We are looking at the stream of religious liberality not as to quantity, but as to quality; not in its majestic sweep, but in its fountain head; not to determine how large, but how pure; not how far shall it flow, but where should it rise; not whither, but whence?

Therefore the first implicit word in this phase of religion is "possession." It is proper to speak of ourselves as possessors; it is improper to speak of ourselves as owners. There is just one owner—that is God. "The cattle upon a thousand hills, and every beast of the forest is

mine." "Ye have taken my silver and my gold." "The world is mine, and the fulness thereof." These are snatches from the solemn protestations of utter ownership which the Divine Father scatters through this holy book of his. It is well enough to think of religion in terms of personal faith, it is well to stress the necessity of individual experience, it is well to emphasize those definite and intimate relations of the soul with its Maker which function in spiritual grace and joy; but such relations have other implications.

What would you say of the love which a husband and father professes for his wife and children, but which contents itself in glowing words and ecstasies; which consumes upon itself the products of toil and the blessings of life? In short, if a man claims to love his family, he will provide for them, he will share in perfect equity whatever he has or earns. The very relationships of the family make such a process of distribution imperative. Likewise, the relations which religion involves between the Father in heaven and his children imply certain reciprocities that are essential. He is provider, but we are to render unto him what is his due. Our love must be more than words, our worship

more than forms. Our religion must bear full recognition of the proprietorship of God. As Bishop Edwin H. Hughes has pointed out, we have the habit of confusing this point with our loose speech; we speak of titles and quit-claim deeds and ownership, but such terms are inaccurate. We say the farm is ours, but God packed the ground with fertility; he stored the iron and the coal and the oil. We say the money is ours, but pursue the coin to the bank, and then to the mint, and then to the mine, and we hear the solemn proclamation that the "silver and the gold are mine."

In the public congregation we habitually sing,

> "All things come of thee, O Lord,
> And of thine own have we given thee,"

and it is more than poetic beauty in worship; it is the statement of sober fact.

This essential, of course, is given a sort of vague and theoretical recognition by most of us, especially by those who try to live Christian lives. The real difficulty is that it has not been coined into a practical program. We sing of God's ownership, we speak of it in lovely figures of speech, but we do not practice it, we do not

liquidate, we do not interpret it in terms of cash and securities as well as of time and talents.

The next implicit word in this phase of religion is "administration." If God is owner and if we are stewards, then the administration of what we have, our gifts, our abilities, our time, our means, our money—all this becomes an integral part of our religion. Once I admit that I owe some one a debt, then the manner in which I discharge or fail to discharge that debt becomes a factor in character. It shows me to be diligent and careful and honest and punctual and sincere, or it shows me to be unscrupulous and uncertain and dishonest. God has given each of us something of value, a brain with its possibilities for development, a genius for business with its talent for making money, a capacity with its enlargement in the direction of power or influence or wealth or prominence. What we have we owe; what is ours is ours to use and not to keep. If one has a talent and does not use it, it atrophies; if he has ability and does not cultivate it, it shrivels; if he has money and does not employ it to bless others, it will corrode the soul. These are not yours to keep but to use; possession involves administration.

"What did he leave?" was asked concerning a

rich man who had died. "All he had," was the laconic reply. "What a man earns in the day he puts into his pocket," said Theodore Cuyler, "but what he spends in the evening he puts into his character." How we use what we have is a good barometric measure of our real moral stature. This is central in religion. We may determine how we give, or when, or where, or how much, but we cannot determine about the fact —it is as inevitable as eternity. If we do not give a good account of our stewardship now, then the day of sober reckoning will come later. More than one parable of our Lord gives us high authority for this insistence upon the truth that for all the gifts and perquisites of our stewardship we all shall be asked to give an accounting.

The third implicit word in this phase of religion is "temptation." No one can give anything like a careful reading to the Bible without feeling the passion of the warnings at this point; and no one can review his own experience and the experience of others without appreciating the timeliness of these warnings. A serious study of this matter is illuminating if not especially encouraging. Perhaps the two prolific sources of disaster just here are ignorance and covetousness. Many are so indifferent on this

question that they do not try to learn the truth, while others are so hardened and calloused in their greed that they stifle all suggestions in the direction of justice and generosity. There they are—ignorance and greed. Ignorance is a misfortune; greed is a crime. Ignorance is a fault which may be remedied by the proper methods of enlightenment; greed is a sin which may be remedied by atonement. Ignorance needs a stream of light; greed a stream of blood. Ignorance must have a teacher; greed, a Saviour.

Temptations in these directions are certain to beset us all. When Paul declared that "the love of money is the root of all evil," he did not refer to millionaires alone, for if he had, it would have had little value for the church of his day. This matter is a question of principle and character and not of amounts. Avarice may fasten upon a dollar or upon a million; greed may corrode the heart of the poor as well as of the rich; paupers may rob God; in fact, their pauperism may have been the result of such proceeding. There is, of course, greater temptation to those who have in abundance; giving one dollar in ten to the Lord does not seem to be as hard as giving one thousand in ten or one million in ten. It is easy for the poor man to declare that he would

willingly give away a half a million if some one would give him a million; but if the million came, he would find it a different proposition. That Jesus had much to say on the point of danger from possessions will appear from a review of his ministry. He spoke often of giving. He counseled his disciples to make a wise use of "the mammon of unrighteousness." He flayed the boasting fool who thought that barns and crops and wealth could satisfy the soul. He challenged a rich young ruler to a life of consecration and sacrifice by the disposition of his property and a humble following of the lowly Nazarene. He urged the continuance of the tithes as well as the weightier matters of faith and mercy and justice, and he sighed out his regret that it seemed so difficult for those who trusted in riches to enter the kingdom of God.

Take the case of the rich young ruler for illustration. Having gotten about all he could of the world, he had come to Jesus to inquire how he might get the good of life eternal. With a statement that he had observed the law from his youth, he wondered what he lacked. In deep love Jesus told him to go sell all he had and come and follow him. The real meaning of the Master becomes more clear as one looks

upon Hofmann's famous painting of this scene. The Saviour's message is told in his hands; so is the ruler's avarice. Jesus's hands are open, free, extended. Kindness and liberality show themselves in that pose so clearly that stupidity itself could not mistake them. But the young man's hand is closing, as is his heart. It is almost a fist. The message of the Christ may be phrased thus: "Open that fist." If you would come to me in sincerity and follow me in acceptability, you must practice the religion of the open hand. The young man went away sorrowful. He was not mad, he was not furious with the Master. The command evidently went straight to the heart of his trouble; but it was so hard to do, that he went out from his presence "sorrowful," and in that mood of unyielding sorrow he walked right out of the New Testament.

So great is this temptation that Christ placed it as the supreme test of Christian service when he said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Do you sense the strategy of that contrast? Mammon, the god of gold, the idol of wealth, the master of so many, mammon was made the second term in an antithesis that would startle the world if it did not know it so well; or if,

knowing it, the full significance were seen. All that is evil, all vice, all wrong, all lust, all crime are crowded into that single term "mammon," and Jesus says that it must be God or that. At the bottom of all sin there is some root of this dreadful thing we call mammon. For every crime or lust or wrong you can name a sin of mammon. If it is war, mammon is the cause; if it is dishonesty, mammon lured the criminal on; if it is political corruption, it is the itching palm that led to the wrong; if it is murder, mammon was at the bottom; and even in lust, which often seems to be apart from this evil, the commercial element has entered so largely as to take possession there also. Mammon stands directly in the path of religious faith and experience and worship and service — no wonder it is the very impersonation of evil, no wonder it is placed in antithesis to God, no wonder it is a foe to true religion.

After the death of a man of vast material means, a millionaire whose benefactions had reached enormous proportions, but whose suicide followed such bad investments as to leave him a bankrupt, his pastor came into possession of his Bible. It was fairly new, and was not marked save in a few places. It was a surprise

to see that nearly all the references marked bore on riches and their temptations. Here are three marked passages:

"And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful." (Mark 4. 19.)

"Beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." (Luke 12. 15.)

"For the love of money is the root of all evil." (1 Tim. 6. 10.)

Once more:

"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy." (1 Tim. 6. 17.)

There was more along the same line, eloquent of the heart cry of a man who thought he had much and who found he had little; what he had he lost, but what he gave he had. The power of temptation at this point overcame a member of the apostolic group, and Judas became the incarnation of mammon that betrayed for the price of a common slave the Saviour of the world. All through the years this subtle allurement has wrecked its multitudes, all through

the ages men and women have fallen victims here, and if we are to be strong in our religious faith and experience, if we are to be acceptable in our religious service, we must conquer here.

The fourth and last implicit word in this phase of religion is "consecration." Consecration may mean much or it may mean little, it may have a general bearing or it may have a keen blade. What it is to mean at this time will be the register of spiritual experiences, confidences, and surrenders in such definite habits of liberality, such generous gifts of benevolence, such practical demonstrations of service that what we have in time and talent and money and ability and property will but furnish us with channels of administration of our means for the culture of a strong character, for the progress of the Kingdom and for the Christian conquest of the world.

God gives one a talent for convincing speech. That talent should be consecrated to such spiritual proclamation as to convince the world of "sin and righteousness and of judgment to come." He gives another the genius for amassing wealth. That genius should be brought so under the mastery of Christ that money will be honestly earned and benevolently administered.

He gives to a third, the capacity for scientific research. That capacity should function in such avenues of knowledge as will lift mankind to higher planes of life. He gives to another the bent for fidelity in humble toil. That bent should accentuate as it works in the direction of honest labor for others and for Christ. In short, if we make our possessions a matter of religious service, we shall be able to consecrate any sort of talent or ability or property to the good of man and the progress of the Kingdom. We can work our religion through our check books as well as through our hymn books and prayer books. We can pay as well as pray; we can give and feel the thrill of service as we do it; we can enter into close relationship with the Father through the recognition of his ownership and the administration of his gifts.

We are learning new lessons in this direction as a nation. We have been piling up wealth at an incredible rate, we have been rolling in money, we have been driving hard at the goal of financial success. Then we began studying in another school; we began giving instead of getting, came upon a day when we began laying under tribute the entire financial resources of the republic. We have been responding to the

drives for various millions for the Red Cross, the Y. M. C. A., gifts for the soldiers, the Liberty Loans and philanthropies on a scale never before attempted.

It is well, for as a nation we are learning a new joy, we are developing a new character, we are making a new sacrifice. By multitudes our boys have made their sacrifice. They went into danger and death, and those whose sacrifice was mere money have made the smaller consecration.

Some time ago a paper published in Chicago printed a cartoon in which Uncle Sam was sitting at a table feasting upon fruit and meats and wine which were being handed him by a richly dressed woman called "Luxury." In the background was a figure of a citizen of Rome, whose hand pointed to the ruined walls and broken columns in the distance, while he said to the feasting guest, "Beware of Luxury; she was once my mistress." Perhaps that lesson now is in process of mastery; perhaps America is coming to a higher plane of life because a plane of giving, of sacrifice, and of consecration. This is a real religious value. It has spiritual content whether for the individual, the church, or the nation. And the great preacher of the

early church in writing to his friends at Corinth urged upon them the necessity of this grace. "As ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also."

Our religious spectrum is not complete without the grace of giving, our religious lives are not full and fruitful without gracious and consecrated administration of all those values involved in stewardship. We shall not count ourselves religious without this fine partnership with divinity. We shall not stress the gospel of the pure heart to the exclusion of the gospel of the open hand. We shall not receive eternal life from those scarred hands with the gift of our left-over change after we have sated ourselves with life's comforts and luxuries; we shall not be satisfied with the crumbs that fall from our groaning tables as our offerings to the Kingdom. We shall not crucify our Christ upon the cross of our complacency. We shall take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord, but we shall also pay our vows in the presence of all his people.

CHAPTER VI

THE RELIGION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

"Religion is the soul's ultimatum."

"A star cannot be imprisoned in a shell; it demands a sky; and to attain perfection and fully display its glory, the soul demands a sky."

Describing the pyramids as evidences of faith and hope, Van Dyke, in The Other Wise Man, calls them, "changeless monuments of the perishable glory and the imperishable hope of man."

CHAPTER VI

THE RELIGION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

In the twenty-third chapter of Matthew and at the twenty-third verse, we have a very interesting wedlock of what may be termed the formalities and the spiritualities of religion. Interesting, in particular, because of the kind and the excess of the formalities mentioned as well as because of the approving words of Jesus upon them. It is an important thing not to lose perspective or proportion, especially in matters moral or religious. In a generation of religious formalities, our Lord properly stressed spiritual reality and spontaneity; in a day of strict obedience to letter he magnified the spirit. Nevertheless, neither his commands nor his prohibitions can be warped into a scorn of legal and formal demands. Even the antinomies of the Sermon on the Mount were of speech rather than of conduct; and if some advanced teachers and preachers of religion in these modern days have gone beyond the Ten Commandments in

their reach for an attenuated spirituality, all one can say for them is that they have gone beyond Jesus. What was the force of the Master's words when he made comparison of his teachings with the laws of Moses?

According to Moses, adultery consisted of the sinful act; according to Jesus, it consisted of the lustful heart. According to Moses, one must love his neighbors; according to Jesus, he must love also his enemies. According to Moses, killing was murder; according to Jesus, hating was the same. These distinctions we learned in our primary days in the Sunday school. Yet where is the person with such mental aberration or moral perversion as to declare that these spiritual doctrines of Jesus repudiated the legal requirements of Moses? Would he be willing to say that Jesus meant hate to be murder, but killing to be something else? that love for enemies is to be cultivated, but not love for neighbors? that lust must be purged from the heart, but not impurity from the life? The position, of course, collapses of its own weakness. Jesus did teach the *spirit* of religion, not in antagonism to the form of religion, but as its supreme quality. Form was the foundation of the structure, spirit the superstructure; or, chang-

ing the figure, form was the root, spirit the bloom. He might have spoken thus:

"Moses said, 'You shall do so and so,' and I say, 'Not that you must not do that, but the *mere* doing of it is not sufficient unless the performance is touched with the vitalizing breath of motive and love.'" Perhaps the most striking example of the announcement of this principle is the one reflected in the passage in Matthew. In no other flash of scorching criticism is formalism set forth in so absurd and contemptuous a light. Tithing is the legal enactment under review. The Pharisees and scribes and other religious leaders among the Jews were so punctilious in the execution of the tithe as to set aside for so-called sacred use one worthless weed in ten from the garden. Certainly, that is tithing *ad absurdum*. Over against such puerile, and even infantile pettiness, Jesus arrayed those mighty and majestic entities, justice and mercy and faith. Imagination can picture no wider diameter, no greater contrast. Nevertheless, even in the very breath in which he scourged these hypocrites with the withering wrath of his scorn, in the breath in which he spake the very antipodes of religious observance, in that breath, he reminded his hearers of the founda-

tion necessity of form and legal code and strict demands when he said, "Though these higher things ye ought to have done, these lower things ye ought not to have left undone." Spirit is greater than letter, love is finer than form, experience is better than ritual, but law must be obeyed, letter must be observed, form must be retained as the footings upon which our religious structure rises.

An apologetic of this sort is rather delicate; it is contrary to the feelings of many; it can be pressed too far, and, therefore, must be considered with discriminating care. Be it far from us to make even a temporary plea for formality as against spirituality. Nevertheless, it is essential that we appreciate the back-line essentials of formal and legal demands on the way to an understanding of the essential value of organized religion, or, as we have it, the church. The magazines are full of articles on the "Failure of the Church," "The Collapse of the Church," "What is the Matter with the Church?" etc. Books are being written under a more or less transparent veil of fiction which raise the same question; in meetings of socialistic or revolutionary character the same challenges are being hurled at the church. Some

writers and speakers are calling for the abolition of the church in the interest of a "democratized religion." From the front in the great war, there have come filtering back letters and volumes relating to those inward experiences of the soldiers which deal with faith and courage and religion with many a thrust at the church and other organized forms of Christianity. Groups of dissatisfied and disgruntled here and there leave the church with the air of those who would wash their garments of the pollution of worldliness and formalism and form a circle for the promotion of satisfaction with themselves and condemnation of everything else. Men of affairs and of the world feel the narrowing, cramping pressure of creed and church regulation and go their unhindered way in indifference or in scorn.

Over against these disquieting and disconcerting facts looms this other contradictory but equally disconcerting fact, that the people in all these various revolting or mutinous groups claim admiration for and, for the most part, allegiance to Jesus Christ. Lauding the Christ, they spurn the church, the one institution in the world laying largest claim to Christ in spirit and in teachings. Manifestly, this is too broad a field for our present discussion. Our present

interest concerns itself with but a single phase of this revolt against the church, namely, that abhorrence of form and that reluctance to be governed by rules, to be bound by regulations; in short, that discounting of the church because of the alleged restrictive influences which it exerts. This feeling has found reflection from time to time in the replies received from various groups in our survey on religion. This was especially true as we have talked with students in the colleges about those vital themes that revealed their inner feelings on religion, and as interviews with soldiers and sailors have reflected prevailing religious convictions among the men in uniform.

For example, we find these young men and women saying such things as the following:

"Religion does not seem to me to be a matter of ceremony and of following certain prescribed rules."

"The whole thing [religion] seems intangible; I should like to have an outline of practical Christian living."

"The spirit of Christ's teachings should be emphasized in preference to the letter."

Then I recall an expression from another group as follows: "If a person is described as

religious, it brings to my mind one who is very devoted to his church or to certain forms or creeds rather than one who is always Christian in an active and practical sense."

A certain student in an Ohio college, in his definition of religion, referred to the intense practical activity of Jesus in good works, quoting those words uttered by Christ while yet a lad, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" He overlooked the fact that a true translation might include also "in my Father's house."

Donald Hankey, an Oxford man on the fighting front, writing for the soldiers on religion, says that the average soldier does not in the least connect what he believes in with Christianity. He thinks that Christianity consists in believing the Bible and setting up to be better than your neighbors. By believing the Bible he means believing that the whale swallowed Jonah and by setting up to be better than your neighbors, he means not drinking nor swearing and preferably not smoking; being close-fisted with your money, avoiding the companionship of doubtful characters and refusing to acknowledge that such have any claim over you. The same writer goes on to say that many men who

believe absolutely in the Christian virtues of unselfishness, generosity, charity, and humility, never connect them in their minds with Christ, much less with the church. We certainly agree with the writer that this is little short of tragedy. It is true that Hankey was writing at that time of soldiers of England that may be called the workingmen and many from the east end of London who had had no real relations with the church, and yet the statement is worth serious consideration if it is true of any considerable number of men anywhere in Christendom. When we reflect upon the fact that in all the armies in this war there are recruits by the thousand from the ranks of the churches, that nearly every church has its honor roll, and all are displaying significant service flags with many stars, it is easy to believe that such ideas on religion are somewhat extreme as related either to officers or men. On the contrary, it is certainly true that chaplains, Y. M. C. A. secretaries, and other religious leaders who have been close to the men in uniform, testify also of the unconcealed impatience of the men with formal cant and note a vigorous insistence on their part on spiritual reality, unselfish candor, and a religious wholesomeness which is as fresh as the

morning. It is evident, therefore, that a certain feeling against formalism is shared by those who answered our questionnaire as well as by the rank and file of younger thinking persons to-day, and development of the subject will be in order.

First, let us lay down the broad proposition that form, as legal requirement, is an utter necessity. It sounds very fine to decry restriction and to plead for liberty, but the fact is that the universe is operated on the plan of law. Worlds did not just happen; there was an orderly plan in their creation and development. Planets do not wander at will through the vast nebular spaces. Their orbit may be calculated to the nicety of a single mathematical diameter. Nature is no anarchist. She is universally obedient to law. Though legalism could not make a world nor form a flower, nor grow a stalk of grain—it required the vitalising breath of the Almighty for that—yet in nature's wondrous laboratory there is obedience and submission to law.

In the social relations of life, the same principle validates our claim. Human affection is the very climax of spontaneity, the very essence of individualism. It cannot be measured, it

cannot be prophesied as to demonstration. Nobody knows what freaks it may play nor in what strange places it may erupt. Our expression "falling in love" suggests the unaccountability of affection. However, even love must feel the pressure of formal rectitude. It may be lovely to proclaim the freedom of the affections, to insist that love have untrammeled liberty, to leave its government to its own caprice, but those who advocate free love appear to be either unquenchable visionaries or unspeakable votaries of lust. Marriage, beautiful sacrament of life, is form, it is restriction, it is law. It seems an irksome load for love to carry, but marriage is a legal and social and moral necessity, and he who would destroy this institution in the interest of a supposed freedom is either afflicted with mental lunacy or with moral leprosy. Without argument or even without example, it will be seen that this principle applies to schools, to industries, and to the various social institutions of the day.

The author in A Student in Arms throws some light on this matter as he writes along this line for the soldier. He takes a typical case of a young fellow from a London shop, who has lived a desultory sort of life, who finds the true

value of discipline. He says of him: "He was learning one of the great truths of life, a truth that so many fail to learn—that it is not in isolation but as a member of a body that a man finds his fullest self-expression; that it is not in self-assertion but in self-subordination, not as an individual but as one of many brethren, sons of one Father, that a man finds the complete satisfaction of his instincts and the highest form of liberty."

The principle has been functioning in our national life in a new and compelling fashion. Millions of young men who have had pretty much their own way and have felt very lightly the hand of restriction have been learning the necessity for utter obedience, for instant and uniform action, and for a complete recognition of the authority of government officers over them. America is a democracy, but unified, obedient action is an essential in the time of war.

It is as clear as sunlight that this principle operates also in religion, making necessary the church. With all his preaching against formalism, Jesus did not dissolve the church. He did not agree with the existing Jewish Church, but he remained with it and observed its forms, be-

ing baptized with its baptism, attending its services so long as the growing antagonism of the leaders would allow him. He preached in the synagogues, he went to the temple, and withdrew to the fields and the highways and the seashore for his preaching only after the pulpits of the sanctuary were closed against him. Then, when his face was set toward Calvary and the shadow of the cross lay across his path, He told those faithful ones who companioned with him that he would build a church which would never fail, against which hell itself would not prevail. This declaration on the part of Jesus is deeply meaningful. It has an intimate bearing on his attitude toward religion. The earnest student will be profoundly impressed with the significance of the following facts:

1. That Jesus Christ founded a movement which must take such form as to be a church.

2. That the church as a Christian institution has survived the vicissitudes of these centuries.

3. That the church or its equivalent is an utter necessity for the success of final and world redemption.

4. That the obligation of church membership is just as real and as strong as the necessity for the existence of the church.

Let us take a brief, but as clear a look as possible at each of these four facts.

First, then, Jesus founded a church or, at least, He began the spiritual movement which crystallized into the Christian Church. He called it, caressingly, "my church,"[1] and took position at its head as founder and upholder through all the coming years. If exact form or elaboration of ceremony or complexity of ecclesiasticism were not involved in Jesus's declaration, at least some tangible, organized movement was involved. If episcopal or presbyterian or congregational involvements were wanting in the simple statements of the Christ, the involvements of a unified program for world conquest were clearly implicit. Let those vigorous-voiced critics whose anathemas are hurled against the church know that they can claim no fellowship with Jesus Christ in their heated denunciations of the institution which he builded. He loved the church and called it tenderly his own, his child, his bride, his prized possession forever. Moreover, in the very founding of the church our Lord gave recognition to the principle for which we are now contending. Forms, though not to be substituted for spirit-

[1] Matt. 16. 18.

ual experiences, are necessary. In the functioning of Christ's plans for the establishment of his kingdom in the earth, he recognized the need of order and law and organization. In those mighty centrifugal movements which carried Christianity from Jerusalem out to those Mediterranean empires there were plan and the beginnings of organization. And after Paul, that early Christian missionary evangelist, had made his wonderful itinerary of evangelizing toil, he found it necessary to retrace his travels and in city after city, where he had labored, to cement the people into a compact and working Christian organization.

Moreover, in that last and apocalyptic message which came from Christ through the lips of John, words of admonition and encouragement were spoken to the church, and out on the field of bitter conflict with the forces of evil a vision of victory was vouchsafed to the crusaders in the name of Christ. Let the cynics beware, let writers of destructive and captious theology under the guise of fiction give pause before they have their fling at an institution established by Christ. Let those superior minds who are above the restrictions of Christ's church measure the meaning of a claim like that; let those pious

and misguided souls who leave the church reflect upon the peril of leaving behind what Christ founded; let us all ponder deeply the eternal weight of this first of our four dynamic facts, that Jesus Christ founded the church.

The second fact of moment in this discussion is this, that the church as a Christian institution has survived the vicissitudes of nineteen centuries. Do we feel the might of the argument of mere survival? When we stand on the shores of history's great river and see the wreckage and the debris go swirling by in the flood, is it not deeply comforting to behold the citadel of Christ's church standing like a Gibraltar? When we remember the criticisms, the feuds, the schisms, the heresies, the credal combats, the wars of intolerance, the leagues with temporal corruption and ecclesiastical tyranny, the schemes and the scandals, the treasons and the trials, the religious assassins and spiritual pirates, the blood stains on the banners and the crimes of those in positions of ecclesiastical prominence; when we remember all that, it becomes a fact of more than passing interest that the Church of Christ still stands. Jerusalem fell, and with it Judaism. The city of the great king, with its temple planted on rock-ribbed

Moriah, seemed likely to last through the ages, but the armies of Titus and Vespasian battered down its walls and left those temple stones a heap of ruins.

Babylon fell. Her walls rose to astonishing heights and were thick enough at the summit for six chariots to be driven abreast. Her streets and boulevards and esplanades, her palaces and libraries and public buildings, her parks and hanging gardens were the wonder of the ancient world. Nebuchadnezzar might pace the parapets and, looking over the great and enduring city, comfort his pride with the reflection, "Is this not great Babylon which I have built for the royal dwelling place by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?" [1] Into her lap flowed the wealth of nations. Caravans from Syria to Egypt came to her markets, while up the Persian Gulf came vessels with the treasures of Ceylon and India. While yet in the glory of such preeminence a prophet of God predicted Babylon's fall.[2] It was a bold piece of impertinent absurdity. Its location argued a prosperous existence while time abides. Commanding the commerce of the East from the Mediterranean to the Indian

[1] Dan. 4. 30. [2] Isa. 13. 19.

Ocean, the strategy of her situation seemed to guarantee to Babylon a flourishing existence until nature failed. Yet Isaiah was right. The city has fallen, and even its ruins of bricks and stone and mold are now inconsiderable and fast passing from sight.

Rome fell, though her commerce touched all shores; her governors sat in all capitals, her eagles subdued all opposing armies. Mighty, conquering, imperial, "eternal" Rome went down in the avalanche of barbarism from the North after her own rottenness had emasculated her strength. Greece fell. Her tongue embellished the literature which ruled the world, her philosophy became the schoolmaster of the nations, her art had no example and has had no peer, her culture shone in brilliance, her beauty was known afar, yet she became but a shadow, a memory, a recollection. Dynasties venerable with age and secure in the power of long-exercised rule have vanished in a night. Religions that have numbered their adherents by the millions fight desperately for life. Social orders that have become fortified by wealth and honor and authority have melted like the snows in spring, but the Church of Christ survives. After the first shock of this European war, the

writers began to flood the daily and periodical press with articles on the failure of Christianity and the collapse of the church." How filled with superheated folly such articles were is coming to be the better discerned as the war closes. Thrones are toppling, imperial power is vanishing, "rule by divine right" is being scuttled by the assaults of Democracy, the militaristic dreams of Prussian egotists are being punctured by the unified revulsion of the civilized world, and the Hohenzollern plan to rule with blood and iron the peoples of the earth is fast passing to that limbo which its diabolism deserves. But the Church of Christ in Europe will emerge, chastened and purified, but stronger and more beautiful than ever before.

Once more, the prophetic vision of the poet will come true when he sings,

> "Crowns and thrones may perish
> Kingdoms rise and wane,
> But the church of Jesus
> Constant will remain;
> Gates of hell can never
> 'Gainst that church prevail,
> We have Christ's own promise,
> And that cannot fail."

The third arresting fact in this connection is this, that the church is an utter necessity for

the success of final and world redemption. It is conceivable that the church has not reached its final form of organization nor attained its complete development. It is further conceivable that no member of the great denominational families is to be chosen over the others for world conquest. It is still further conceivable that many changes, many improvements, many purifications, nay even many chastenings may be necessary in order to keep the church fit for service in the redemption of the race. It is but the sober fact of history that the church has failed at certain points to measure up to its emergent responsibilities. Such failure may be seen in Australia, where the religious leaders confederated with the exploiters of labor to the alienation of the working classes from the church. It may be seen in Russia, where ecclesiasticism worked cheek by jowl with Czarism and registered its failure in revolution. On Easter morning, in Petrograd, instead of printing the traditional salutation, "Christ is risen," the papers carried at the top of their front pages the announcement, "This is the birthday of Karl Marx," and for the substitution the spiritual bondage of the church was responsible. Such failure may be seen in

Germany, where theology became agnostic materialism, where prophets became mere echoes of the oracle that spake from the Prussian throne, and where the people were betrayed by their spiritual shepherds into the hands of military wolves. These are historic facts, but it is utterly inconceivable that Christ will proceed to the world's evangelization without some church. Individuals may be never so pious, missionary zeal may be never so strong, evangelistic labors may be never so fruitful, yet the kingdom of God can never really come on earth without an organized comprehensive campaign.

Every now and again some few people who are dissatisfied with the church and who lament its weakness or its worldliness, leave the church where perhaps they have been converted, in whose sanctuaries they have felt God's presence, from whose ministries they have been comforted in sorrow, guided in darkness, helped in temptation, have gathered a few kindred spirits around them and have sung and prayed themselves into the rapture of feeling better than anybody else and turning all else over to the devil. There are several observations one might make in such a situation:

1. That these people have taken precisely the

wrong course if they desire to save the church from destruction.

2. That they immediately begin to form in reality, if not in name, another church.

3. That their intense loyalty to their group is likely to be a more dominating passion than their desire to save the world.

4. That the motives which usually prompt such departures are anything but Christian and may be classified in most cases under jealousy, stinginess, or fanaticism. The church is not perfect, the church has many lessons still to learn, but the church is a necessity for the redemption of the world.

We now face calmly but resolutely our last searching fact. If the church is Christian and if its existence is necessary for the redemption of the world, then, by the same token, membership in the church is an obligation. It is a privilege, it is a blessing, it is a joy—but all that belongs to another story. What we desire to inflame just now is the point that in the presence of the church one confronts a definite obligation. Very often one meets people who speak kindly toward Christianity and have friendly words for the church; sometimes they declare that they are Christians and are trying to follow the example

and teachings of Christ but who are not members of any church. "We go to all the churches," they declare with unction. Suppose others should pursue the same policy—there would be no churches to attend. If early settlers in any State or community had adopted such a free and individualistic policy, and if this policy had been continued to this day, religion would have died, morality would have been engulfed in wickedness, while imagination would not be able to picture the barbarism of our land. For years, now reaching into centuries, some of these churches have stood in their communities. They have been the citadels of truth and righteousness. They have been beacon towers of gospel light and helpful ministry, they have been saviours of the State and city. Therefore it seems unthinkable that any self-respecting man or woman would receive the blessings from an institution, yet refuse it allegiance or temporal means and moral support.

The judgment of sober reflection is one of gratitude for a place in the church, of joy for the privilege of membership in an organization established by Christ, prospered by his favor, secure against foes, without and within, through the vicissitudes of nineteen centuries, and

stronger to-day than ever before in its history. Considerate souls are thankful for the church where spiritual blessings come upon them, where the holiest relations of life are sanctified and where the tenderest words of comfort assuage their grief. They are thankful for the church which enrolls them as members and which offers them a field of labor wide enough for the fullest play of their best powers.

The insistent task of the church is to reveal to those beyond its borders such a spirit of the lowly Christ, to understand so completely the deeper yearnings for good of those whose religious expression does not assume the customary forms of ritual and formal service, to help so sympathetically the unchurched multitudes that all the world will come to see the essential Christian qualities in the church and essential commonness of purpose of all who strive for the noblest and the best; in short, to be brothers to all to whom Jesus Christ himself is the Elder Brother. In the name of Him who built the church and who promised it the eternal youth of redemptive service, in His name we must keep the church strong and pure and brotherly, that its mission may not fail, that its star may not fall, that its glory may not fade.

CHAPTER VII

THE RELIGION OF THE FORWARD LOOK

It was said of Christopher Columbus by one of his countrymen: "The instinct of an unknown continent burned in him."

So with mortal man.

"Earth fades! Heaven breaks on me: I shall stand next
Before God's throne: the moment's close at hand
When man the first, last time has leave to lay
His whole heart bare before his Maker; leave
To clear up the long error of a life,
And choose one happiness forever more."

—*Browning.*

"Religion without a great hope would be like an altar without a living fire." *Artabon, in Van Dyke's The Other Wise Man.*

"There is no death! What seems so is transition;
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the Life Elysian
Whose portal we call Death.
She is not dead—the child of our affection—
But gone to that school
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,
And Christ himself doth rule."

—*Longfellow.*

CHAPTER VII

THE RELIGION OF THE FORWARD LOOK

It has been one of the favorite criticisms of theology that it gave too large a place to speculation concerning the future. What is to be the nature of the eternal state of the blessed and what is to be the character and intensity of the punishment of the wicked are declared to take precedence over what are to be our relations and our duties here and now. The criticism was not entirely unjust. Theology has concerned itself too intensely with eschatological rather than with practical aspects of religious faith. I recall that my own supreme effort of the seminary days was my graduating thesis on "The Doctrine of Future Punishment." That treatise was not at all humorous and did not refer to the punishment which I was to inflict on my future hearers. It is easy to recall also the surprise and even shock with which I learned that one of the graduates had chosen as his subject, "The Lower East Side." "What place," I reflected "did a discussion of the slums

of New York city have in a commencement exercise of a school of theology?" The shocked surprise of a theological graduate was merely a voice for the unspoken understanding that such common, sordid, everyday matters as slums and tenements and wages and food and sanitation were quite outside the range of theological thought and consideration. Happily, even within these few years since then, the situation in our institutions of theological training has been entirely changed, and departments of social service and applied religion are attempting to atone for a long-standing deficiency.

On the other hand, out in practical life there was another and contradictory movement plainly visible: a movement in the direction of a purely material plane of religious thought and activity. "Service" was the magic word upon many lips and thrust into many books; doing was the thing everywhere stressed; clubs, institutional features in the church, committees and organizations filled the religious horizon, and pragmatism became life's popular philosophy. The practical phases of religion have received such cordial indorsement and such unreserved allegiance in this series of discussions that no apologetic of that sort is needed now. Prac-

tical religion is the only kind of religion worthy the name or the acceptance. With that movement, however, there came another tendency to shift so completely the religious emphasis to the present that a good many people seemed to forget entirely about the future. Accenting this tendency was the teaching of certain brilliant but materialistic exponents of extreme scientific and rationalistic tenets in the schools and from the platforms and in the volumes with which they regaled the public. "There is no proof of a future anyhow," they are saying. "You cannot find its germ under the microscope; neither the scalpel nor the test tube has discovered it, no one has ever experienced it who has submitted any reliable testimony on the subject; therefore in the absence of proof, we must refuse to believe it." Men of affairs, those who did not bother much to think out a philosophy for themselves, simply passed it all by as something unknowable and as being so academic that, after all, it did not do to worry over.

In these replies received to our questionnaire, there are several that voice that same unconcern about the future, declaring that the present is all we know anything about and that the fu-

ture will take care of itself. Notwithstanding all this, one cannot touch any number of persons on the question of religion without discovering that the belief in a future life is implicit in the heart of the race and that "the hope of immortality" is a heritage of humankind.

"Religion is my only hope of eternal life."

"Religion is everything to live for, the only thing to die by, and our only hope for eternity."

"Religion makes the individual conscious at all times of the fact that if he should be called to depart from this world, it is well with him."

That statement, so certain and reassuring, was written by one who, within a year of penning it, had faced that very call.

"Religion means living in the power of the hope that maketh not ashamed, having the face ever lifted toward the light, though seeing the sorrow around one, and serving diligently the will of the king."

One person referred to that little brochure by Henry van Dyke, The Mansion, in which John Weightman, a self-made and self-satisfied churchman, found, in a dream, that in the future life there would be a reckoning, and that his life warranted, not a mansion, but a hut.

"If a man has a religion that fits him to live

in this world, it will fit him also for that other world," says one.

"Religion involves that change of heart, that new birth which brings life eternal," declares another.

A man who has no relation to the church and who is not a professing Christian wrote thus:

"Men who may have refused religion up to middle life or old age, frequently change their ways when the warning of death comes." This is evidently a lifeboat idea of religion, to use only when the battered, sinking ship is about to go down.

A gentleman of large business ability set his pen to paper and announced these three rather startling affirmations:

1. "I affirm that the existence and personal identity of the individual continues after the change called death."

2. "I affirm that communication with the so-called dead is a fact scientifically proven by the phenomena."

3. "I affirm that the doorway to reformation is never closed against any human soul, here or hereafter."

Continuing, he says: "I do not believe in the immortality of the soul to the effect that it

has inherent immortality." "It is the gift of God."

"My hope lies in the resurrection of the dead and the gift of salvation for all."

Again he says: "All the wicked will God destroy after one opportunity in the second death."

The man who wrote these contradictory statements may draw a princely salary from a big corporation, but evidently not for his ability at logical utterance.

He finds it possible to believe at the same time in the following truths: (1) that immortality is not inherent, but the gift of God; (2) that everybody will be saved; (3) that, after one opportunity beyond the grave, the impenitent will be destroyed.

In short, he believes at one and the same time in conditional immortality and the certainty of the future punishment, in universal salvation, in annihilation for the wicked and a second probation. Despite these strange and contradictory words, despite the surface indifference on the part of pragmatists, despite the stress upon the practical features of religious service, the future is a fixture in current thought and immortality an essential in full and final religion.

Coming to closer grips with this subject, we find four demands for the religion of the forward look.

1. The demand of intuition.
2. The demand of conservation.
3. The demand of retribution.
4. The demand of revelation.

First, then, is the demand of intuition. The postulate of man's immortality is as ancient as the race itself. Before the dim beginnings of creed and dogma, before the chosen people were instructed in the truths of revelation, before the immutable laws of the Infinite God were committed to written form, back there in the far-off beginnings of the race there existed the belief in a future life and there arose a demand for a religion that would satisfy that belief. A study of various early races will accentuate this point. The primitive Egyptians held to a definite doctrine of future existence and embalmed their dead in preparation of the life beyond the grave. The peoples of India have elaborated a system of transmigration of soul which amuses or saddens according to one's mood, but which expresses their intuitive longings for a boon for which, alas! until these late years, there was no revelation. Homer wrote

suggestions of immortality into both the Iliad and the Odyssey; Socrates affirmed the future existence of the soul; Virgil embodied the same idea in virile verse, and poets have pictured, just as philosophers have dreamed, of a future Elysium.

Stop a person to-day in the midst of the rush of modern life, and despite the distractions of business, despite the materialistic veneer of much of current thought, despite the pragmatic basis of much of modern philosophy, you are likely to find that in his moments of quiet sanity, he will instinctively reach for immortality.

There may be those who claim to feel as that brilliant author of "The Prisoner of Chillon" felt, when at six and thirty he sighed,

> "My days are in the yellow leaf,
> The flowers and fruits of life are gone;
> The worm, the canker, and the grief
> Are mine alone!"

But when life is unblurred by vicious debauch, unspoiled by cynical reproach, and untouched by fatuous remorse, it is certain to have an outlook upon the future.

Intuition will give us "Intimations of Immortality," the gleams of a glorious "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," and a peaceful, radiant

"Crossing of the Bar." And even Byron, after penning his lament about the yellow leaf, returned to sanity long enough to exclaim,

> "I feel my immortality o'ersweep
> All pains, all tears, all time, all fears, and peal,
> Like the eternal thunders of the deep,
> Into my ears this truth—'Thou liv'st forever!'"

It is vitally significant that the heart of mankind turns instinctively toward a future life. Sir Oliver Lodge voices what we must all sometimes feel when he says, "I will not believe that it is given to man to have thoughts nobler and loftier than the real truth of things." And the Master adds his well-remembered assurance that we are not to let our hearts trouble us about these things, for "If it were not so, I would have told you."

The intuitions of the heart, unspoiled by antagonism, can be trusted. For the longing spirit there is rest, for the weary traveler there is a haven, for the lonely pilgrim there is home, for the folded wing there is the heaven's air, for the aspiring soul there is the mountain height, for the yearnings of the life for immortality there is satisfaction. "If it were not so, I would have told you."

Then there is the demand of conservation. Science has taught us that no particle of matter is destroyed. It may be changed, it may be crushed or burned, or dissolved or altered in some fashion or other, but it is not vanished from existence. Now it is solid, now liquid, now gas, but it cannot be banished to nonexistence, and not even the magic wand that once waved in a feminine hand in Boston has accomplished this feat. Nature is no waster. What she does not need here she uses there. Where she has a surplus of sunshine she stores it up in deep veins against the winter's cold. Where there is an excess of water she gathers it up in her fingers and spreads it over the thirsty lands. She is prodigal as provider, but she never wastes. She is the great conserver. So is it with nature's God. He provides in abundance, he gives with the glad, free hand of a loving Father, but he does not waste. None of his gifts he wastes, much less those rare gifts of personality.

If man is the fine, high, noble being we think he is; if he has fiber of brain and quality of heart, and power of initiative and graces of thought and utterance; if he can stand upon his feet and look into the very face of the Almighty, then all the laws of nature's economy, all the

moral requirements of conservation, all the insistence of the perpetuity of the worthy, challenge the continuance of the superior powers of human personality. God could not meet the demands of high ethical assumptions were he to create a Socrates, a Shakespeare, a Washington, a Wesley, and then, after a few shuttling years, after a few words of beauty or of wisdom, a few deeds of valor or of sacrifice, a few thoughts expressed, a few plans executed, a few achievements accomplished, throw such precious materials out into the world's junk heap. We look into the very face of God and thank him for the divinity which he has given us, the sun-crowned glory with which he has encircled us, and say to him in meekness and yet in candor, "You have made us partner with divinity and we cannot be discarded after threescore and ten." We have the capacity of thought, but our brains must not be thrown away after just a few years of thinking. We have the power of achievement, but our work must not disintegrate once we have builded it. The incentive for doing what we do is that it will stand.

At a certain State prison before the present excellent merit and labor system was inaugurated, the plan was to do anything to keep the

inmates occupied. Organizing the "Lifers" into a squad, they equipped them with wheelbarrows and sent them to wheel the crushed stone that had been dumped in one corner of the prison yard over to another corner of the inclosure, then had them haul it back, etc. Notwithstanding the fact that these men were serving life sentence—all plans forsaken, hopes all dead, castles all fallen—these men mutinied. They said that if they were to work, they wanted to do something worth doing and that would stand after it was finished. So much the more for us who have hopes and plans and ambitions—our work must stand, or it is not worth doing.

"For half a century I have been writing my thought in prose, verse, history, philosophy, drama, romance, tradition, satire, ode, song—I have tried all. But I feel I have not said the thousandth part of what is in me! When I go down to the grave I can say, like so many others, 'I have finished my day's work;' but I cannot say, 'I have finished my life;' my day's work will begin again the next morning." So wrote Victor Hugo as he faced his death, and in some such way we all think of the incompleteness of this life and of the necessity of an-

other life to conserve its rich gifts, to complete its valued labors.

Then there is the demand of retribution. If there is little patience with the traditional discussions of eternal punishment in these days, there is the insistence inherent in human consciousness for a better and fuller adjustment of life's equities than the brief span of an earthly life affords. Let the impatient utilitarian reflect upon the utter injustice of ending the record of human service on the one hand or human perfidy on the other with the grave. Religion as a program for to-day is axiomatic, religion as a plan of practical service is essential; but religion must not say her final word at the tomb, she must not consider the record closed after the flitting space of a few years here. The soldier out there on the fighting front needs something more from religion than merely "programs" and "service," something more than just what can be done here and now. He needs a grip upon the eternal; he is facing stern realities, he is looking into the jaws of death, into the mouth of hell, he is rubbing elbows with awful facts, he is facing the terrors that fly by day and far worse than the arrow that flieth by night. His life has been short, his achieve-

ments have been few, his life has been, for the most part, preparing, planning, dreaming of future accomplishment, of coming realization. Now he is in fair way to end it all in the path of a bullet or as fodder for cannon. Will it, indeed, be the end of all? Ask those of us who have seen our sons and our brothers and our husbands march forth in a war which is to determine human liberty for all time and to remake the world in terms of morality and righteousness; ask any of us whether we are saying good-by to these dear ones in the thought, that, if they do not come back, there is nothing for them but oblivion. A certain British officer is quoted as saying that he has never seen a single man in the trenches who questioned immortality. Face to face with death, no man can convince himself that death ends all.

"I have seen the naked souls of men, stripped of circumstances, rank, reputation, wealth, or poverty. I have seen the vanity of the temporal and the glory of the eternal. I have despised comfort and honored pain. I have understood the victory of the cross. O death, where is thy sting?" This was written by Donald Hankey in A Student in Arms, June 1, 1915, and he was killed in action on the Western

front October 26, 1916. "The death of a hero convinces all of eternal life." "In the hour of danger all good men are believers; they choose the spiritual and reject the material."

When one has seen a family disintegrate while yet in the first flushes of radiant hopes; when he has seen the fair young mother die, and light of reason fade from the father's eyes and the children drift hither and yon in the frail bark of tender youth whither the winds and waves of caprice might carry them, then comes an inward question which may burst into outward cry, "O God, there must be some way and some place in which to right these wrongs if justice is to rule the universe." When you have seen a child cursed into life rather than born into it, a victim of unpromising heredity and discouraging environment, a pauper by necessity and a criminal by training, it is impossible to resist the claim upon some future where justice will balance the uneven scales.

The despoiler of women and children cannot come to the same fate with his innocent victims; the atrocities of the Prussian beast cannot go unpunished; the thief and the liar and the murderer cannot share the bliss of the pure and the noble and the good. Even if the Bible said

nothing about a heaven and a hell, the human sense of common justice would demand them.

Finally, there is the demand of revelation. Back yonder in the old Book we read that plaintive question from the lips of Job: "If a man die, shall he live again?" and later in the poem we hear this answer to the question: "And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." The Hebrew prophets were thoroughly imbued with the conception of immortality as the climax of existence and called the people to such lives of faith and rectitude as to function in future happiness and salvation. Then in the New Testament, there is that virile chapter from the pen of Paul concerning the beauty and glory of the resurrected state, when corruption shall have put on incorruption, when mortality shall have been swallowed up of life, when the sting of death shall have been healed and victory of the grave shall have been broken. And, finally, there are those throbbing words from the lips of our Lord which have always soothed and inspired the anxious and the eager and have lighted the way to that better land.

John records them in his Gospel at the fourteenth chapter.

One night a minister was called from bed by the frantic voice of a neighbor urging him to hurry to the bedside of another neighbor who was very ill. As soon as he could get his bearings he heard the heartrending screams coming from the patient, who was a woman living a few doors away. The family and friends were in a frenzy. No one could quiet her. The physician had failed to do so, and as a last resort they sent for the preacher. He was not their pastor; in fact, she was not a member of any church. The man of God entered the sick room, went to the bed, took the woman by the hand and said to her, "Don't you want me to read something to you that is very beautiful?" Hushing for a moment her screams, he began in a low, clear voice to read: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." The patient repeated after him these words, and on until the end of the chapter. They seemed

the soothing portion of slumber, the quickening vision of sunrise, the glowing hope of the dawn. She rested, she believed, she prayed, she slept, she trusted, and, after a time, she died.

Here is the final authority on the subject of religion in its forward look. Socrates thought there was a future. Wordsworth had his "Intimations of Immortality," but Jesus both assumed it and pronounced it. He assumed it with the calm certainty of intuition; he pronounced it with full consciousness of experience. He gave to a vague and longing hope the bold, clear outlines of reality. He wrote into the vocabulary of common speech the language of another world. His consciousness of divinity held him to the height of constant communion, and he who communes with God could never think of final death. His visions of paradise were reminders of the land from which he had come and to which he would go, and the veil seemed always thin between him and the eternal city. And when wicked hearts had cursed him, and cruel hands had crucified him, and death had tried to shut him in a tomb, the sepulcher shone with a heavenly glory, the vain bands of death were broken, and Jesus Christ came forth

in the warm beauty of his resurrection, "The first fruits of them that slept."

Religion has now come to its climacteric. It has now been crowned with its fullest glory. It has shown, to use a phrase oft used by certain theologians, "the power of an endless life." The power, not merely of endless existence, but the true dynamic of immortality exerted now and forever. Immortality has its "intimations" here, but what is more to the point it has its "implications" here. The strength and beauty of immortal life must have their beginnings in this earthly life. If I am going to live forever, my manner of life assumes a new dignity and a new significance. If I am going to live forever, then I must give such direction to this present life that it will not need to change direction at the grave. If I am going to live forever, then my taste for eternal things must have certain cultivation here; I must accustom myself in habits of thought and graces of speech and qualities of heart to heavenly spheres. If I am going to live forever, I must not scar my imagination with the vicious and the vile nor stain my memory with the low and the lewd. If I am going to live forever, these passing years must be crowded with such worthy service that

the increment on my life investment will be built into the joys of celestial millenniums.

O, this is the "power of an endless life"!—the power of redeeming this present life from pettiness and of setting it in the high dignity of eternity; the power of giving new and nobler values to life's experiences and new and worthier appraisals to life's toils. This is the "power of an endless life," that now every task is undertaken in the white light of its eternal bearings, every relationship is regarded in the rare sanctity of its eternal beauty, every service is rendered in the rich radiance of its eternal glory.

If this be the crown of religion, then we shall be content. If faith is to issue in sight, then we shall walk the dark pathways with a new confidence, for the morning soon will dawn. If experience has in it the quality of eternity, then we shall guard it with a new care and culture it with a new devotion. If struggle is to end in victory, then we shall fight with a new courage and strive with a new confidence. If service is to have flashed upon it the illumination of celestial lights, we shall labor with greater patience and build with greater diligence since our building is to stand forever. If generosity is to go on and on in its blessings and if the stream

of unselfish giving is to flow past the very throne of God, we shall reduce our necessities and enlarge our liberalities in the interest of final benefactions. If the church is the bride of Christ, and must stand before his presence, and the presence of angelic hosts, without spot nor wrinkle, then we shall keep it pure and strong and ready for the wedding supper of the Lamb. If the final goal of religion is eternity, we shall trust and love and toil and struggle and pray and give and serve, and come at last to Him who has called us and who saves us with the "power of an endless life." If these are the final gifts of religion, we shall be content.

"And so beside the Silent Sea
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

"I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care."

—*Whittier.*

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